



# The Ethiopian Herald

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Tel: +251 116 63 97 55/ 251 116 63 51 22/25  
Mob.: +251 962 009 072/ +251 949 440 868  
+251 911 45 9790  
E-mail: sales@agiethiopia.com  
4th Floor, Dabi Building, Bole road Addis Ababa Ethiopia

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## Institute installing automated meteorological devices across Ethiopia

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

**ADDIS ABABA** - The installation of automated weather forecast machines that provide timely weather data and help to prevent disasters is set to complete within one year, the Ethiopian Meteorology Institute (EMI) announced.

Speaking to the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA), EMI Deputy Director General Kinfe Hailemariam said that they are installing three radars, four lightning strike prevention devices, ten air pollution monitoring stations and air condition monitoring systems in different parts of the country.

See *Institute installing ... Page 3*

# Ethiopia- South Africa electrical interconnection in pipeline

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

**ADDIS ABABA** - The Ethiopian Electric Power (EEP) unveiled plan to create grid connection between Eastern and Southern Africa Power Pools to supply energy to South

Africa. EEP Director General Ashebir Balcha told *The Ethiopian Herald* that as part of its power expansion plan, the country has been working to strengthen economic integration in the Horn of Africa through supplying electric power.

Accordingly, he said, the country is working to create a grid connection between Eastern and Southern Africa Power pools.

"Ethiopia has been achieving its ambitious plan

See *Ethiopia-South Africa ... Page 3*



Nasise Chali

## Hotel rating pivotal to competitiveness, service excellence:

Minister

Page 3

# Abbay Dam construction enjoys strong public support

BY YESUF ENDRIS

**ADDIS ABABA**- The continued financial support from Ethiopians for the construction of the Abbay Dam is being intensified in the project's current final stage, the coordination office said, mentioning the funding in various income-generating schemes.

The Office of the National Council for the Coordination of Public Participation to the Construction of the Abbay Dam Director General Aregawi Berhie (PhD) told the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that the public supports the building of the iconic dam financially, professionally, and in other ways.

While some 10 million Birr has been secured from the public to the iconic dam in the SMS scheme in each month, the non-financial support also remains strong.

Noting the boost in the public-government coordination for the execution of the Abbay Dam, Aregawi (PhD) indicated that continued public support to the iconic dam showcases how Ethiopians are really eager to support developmental projects.

About the progress of the dam, the director general stated that the project is nearing to the completion owing to the robust partnership of the government and all segments of the society. Also, the office and environmental protection advocacy institutions insisted on

See *Abbay Dam ... Page 3*



Aregawi Berhie (PhD)



# News

## Public Universities digitalizing learning method

BY YESUF ENDRIS

**ADDIS ABABA** -Public Universities announced that they are digitalizing education process with guidance of Ministry of Education and technology companies.

Addis Ababa University President, Samuel Kifle (PhD) said that the University is working with expansion of projects aimed at guiding teaching-learning processes with latest technologies including Artificial Intelligence.

A studio assisted with smart classroom technologies has already been inaugurated in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, Huawei and other technology companies, he said, adding that students will get the best educational service following the completion of the digital campus project.

Bahir Dar University President, Firew Tegegne (PhD) on his part indicated that digitalization of educational modalities is one of most prioritized action plans of the

University.

As to him, about 89 smart classrooms have been accomplished in different campuses of the University.

Firew expressed that the plan is to make all classrooms smart equipped with AI and related technologies.

He also noted that the University is delivering trainings and supporting other educational institutions to own digital services.

Jimma University ICT Director, Esmael Kedir (PhD) also stated that cloud campus networking is being developed and installed.

“Jimma University has around 410 programs at various levels and around 40,000 plus students. So far, the University has interconnected all its six campuses using cloud campus networking. Students’ services, such as registration, are well digitized. Development of ICT data base, smart classrooms, and smart service delivery will be in place soon,” he said.



Samuel Kifle (PhD)



Firew Tegegne (PhD)



## Huawei pledges to accelerate digital transformation

BY MESERET BEHAILU

**ADDIS ABABA** – Chinese technology companies, Huawei promised to bridge digital infrastructure gap, and reduce technology limitation thereby ensuring digital transformation of financial sector in Ethiopia.

Up on the closing remark of Huawei Financial Summit Week, EthSwitch S.C. CEO Yilebes Addis said that the event is a significant milestone intensifying Ethiopia’s Journey towards advancing digital transformation. It is also a pivotal element for the national economic development whilst increase the innovation and collaboration of financial parts.

He said, “Ethiopia is facing many in providing access to financial service. For example, only 45 % of adults operation has formal bank or financial service account in 2020, as stated Ethiopian National Financial Inclusion Strategic Document. Therefore, realizing comprehensive approach, leveraging technology, and the likes required to address a numbers of challenges.”

He further stated that digital financial services can enable millions of citizens to enjoy convenient and secure provision of services. Digital transformation also improves the efficiency and comprehensiveness of financial institutions through reduces costs and increase revenue.

It means that the summit gives unique opportunity to share the future of financial service in Ethiopia.

“The nation has given due emphasis to digital technology following the reformist government eyes on digital transformation, national financial inclusion strategy, and realize digital Ethiopia,” he added.

He stated that EthSwitch plays a pivotal role in simplifying payment, facilitating activities, transaction and developing fundamental payment infrastructure with share responsibility of all financial institutions.

Cloud Business Department Huawei National Africa Vice President, Tim Liu on his part said that digital innovation is not a solely option but crucial to growth, sustainability, and competitive advantages.

Financial sector is one of the most important industry in government supported policies and useful for transformation lead. However, lack of digital infrastructure, financial inclusiveness limitation, and cyber security matter are among the serious factors to bring the required outcome. Therefore, digital technology would fill those wide gap in the future and successful digital service as well as secure for all Ethiopian people. Huawei today, offering from infrastructure, cloud, better base, data, security application from China ICBC Bank, China Commercial Bank, and so forth, Liu underlined.

## Layo Teraga wins 4<sup>th</sup> edition of Ethiopian Coffee Quality Contest

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

**ADDIS ABABA**- Layo Teraga, a local coffee union, was announced yesterday as the winner of the 4th edition of the Ethiopian Coffee Quality Contest and received a certificate for its achievement in the export market.

The Ethiopian Coffee Quality Contest 2024 was held in the Fairtrade Africa’s partnership with the International Trade Centre (ITC). Banko Michata and Oromia Coffee farmers’ cooperative unions finished second and third in the competition respectively.

Speaking at the occasion, Fairtrade Africa Country Representative Tadesse Negash said that the competition aims to promote coffee-producing farmers and unions and create international market linkage. It also envisions ensuring the sustainability of farmers’ livelihoods, encouraging the production of high-quality coffees by encouraging value addition.

Ten certified coffee unions participated in the competition and presented their samples whereby three of them were selected finally. The competition was overseen by two Ethiopian judges and one Brazilian coffee taster.

“Farmers of the three winners of the 4th Edition of Ethiopian Coffee Contest will get a better premium

and get an additional 25 U.S. cents from sale volume that will be used for construction of roads and schools,” Tadesse remarked.

In his opening remark at the contest, ITC Ethiopia National Coordinator of the Netherlands Trust Fund Simachew Mekonnen said that the project focuses on ensuring coffee value chain competitiveness, digitalization and sustainability.

A quarter of the Ethiopian population’s livelihoods directly or indirectly depend on coffee production. The coffee market should go beyond looking at coffee only as a drink and explore the use of the commodity in alternate products.

“Moreover, the ITC’s program intervention in Ethiopia focuses on the digitization, sustainability and competitiveness of Ethiopia’s coffee production and value chain.”

Today’s Golden Cup contest mainly meant to promote quality coffee production starting from harvesting, processing, and up to end export, increase the premium price for the commodity. It also helps to encourage cooperatives to give attention to quality coffee production and promote knowledge exchanges with experts and practitioners coming from South America, Simachew elaborated.

# News

## Hotel rating pivotal to competitiveness, service excellence: *Minister*

BY ESSEYE MENGISTE

**ADDIS ABABA** - The newly-held hotel rating is vital to maintain a competitive spirit, improve service quality, enhance customer experience, and boost the Ethiopian hospitality industry's global position, the Tourism Minister said.

The Tourism Ministry announced on Thursday the star classification results of 31 hotels that have met the mandatory criteria set by the World Tourism Organization. Among the 64 star-designated hotels in 2022 and 2023, seven are ranked four stars and another nine ranked three stars.

Also, five hotels are ranked 2 stars and another eight ranked one star, while two hotels are below the standard. These hotels are located in Addis Ababa as well as Bishoftu and Adama towns of the Oromia State.

Speaking at the event, Tourism Minister Nasise Chali stated that hotel grading is of great significance to boost international competitiveness and improve service delivery to tourists and other customers.

The classification also helps tour operators, conference and exhibition organizers, international communication channels, and their customers as well as service providers to carry out trust-based promotion work.

There are many obstacles to the development of Ethiopia's tourism industry and one of which is the low level of quality and competitiveness of tourist-friendly services. Therefore, it is important to improve the quality of the hospitality service and boost the hotels global competitiveness, and increase the satisfaction of guests, she elaborated.

Nasise further highlighted that through providing professional support and supervision to hotels in all parts of country, including Addis Ababa, the ministry has made consolidated efforts to enable them to comply with mandatory requirements including fire prevention, health care,

utilities and other standards.

"Before tourists come to Ethiopia for a visit, the hotels and facilities available in the destinations they visit are used as a source of pre-visit information to estimate the level of service quality. It is also known that the classification system has a significant role in enabling fairness and transparency in government service procurement."

By increasing the capacity of local experts, 91 hotels were given different ratings in 2019. Out of the 456 hotels, 340 have been rated from one to five stars, and the rest are below the standard, the minister remarked.

## Firm holds *Iftar* program for Muslim drivers

BY STAFF REPORTER

**ADDIS ABABA** -Recognizing the drivers' vital role in providing safe and convenient transportation across the metropolis and Sheger City, Yango, an international tech company and a ride-hailing app in Ethiopia, has celebrated dedicated Drivers Appreciation Day.

As to the press release sent to *The Ethiopian Herald*, Yango, together with its franchise partner G2G IT Solutions, acknowledges partner drivers appreciation day as the backbone of its operations and serving as a heartfelt recognition, professionalism, and commitment to delivering exceptional service to passengers.

As to the statement, Yango presented each driver with specially designed Yango gifts and merchandise to show appreciation. These tokens symbolize the important role drivers play and the strong partnership between Yango and its partners' driver community.

In addition, recognizing the importance of Ramadan, it was indicated that the company hosted a special *Iftar* program for its Muslim drivers to foster a sense of community and inclusion, allowing drivers to breakfast together and strengthen their solidarity.

G2G IT Solutions Chief Technology Officer (CTO), Tedros Mehari said that the Day provides a platform to express their sincere thanks and acknowledge their significant contribution to their success and to create a space for the drivers to connect, celebrate special occasions, and build lasting memories together.

"G2G IT solutions is also working to launch Yango Care, a monthly award for top performing drivers with major discounts on mobile data plans, fuel and groceries," the CTO stated.

Recognizing its drivers as key ambassadors for ensuring passenger satisfaction on every journey, he reaffirmed that his company remains committed to providing a safe, reliable, and customer-centric ride-hailing experience.

The CTO further remarked that through the initiatives like Driver Appreciation Day, Yango builds a collaborative environment that benefits both drivers and passengers.

of reaching more countries via power and we will reach South Africa soon by connecting the two power pools. The grid system would be connected after reaching Tanzania then Zambia to reach out South Africa," he said.

Moreover, there is an extended plan to reach Europe via Egypt by completing the construction electricity infrastructure (line 2), he said, adding this would enable to connect Europe with Africa through power.

Currently, the country has been

exporting electric power to neighboring countries including Sudan, Djibouti and Kenya.

An agreement has been reached with Tanzania to supply power while South Sudan, Somaliland Uganda, Rwanda and others have shown keen interest to import power from Ethiopia, he expressed.

According to the Director, the country has been exporting 10% of the total generated power in which some 85% is left to fulfilling local demand, he

noted.

Today Ethiopia produces a total of 5250MW energy from various sources, Ashebir said disclosing the ambition that the existing total energy will get doubled following the completion of the construction of Abbay dam project.

The EEP would generate about 200 million USD annually exporting electric power once the energy export to Kenya commenced in full capacity, he stated.

## Ethiopia- South Africa ...

## Institute installing automated...

That device are being installed in South Western Ethiopia, Central Ethiopia, and Amhara states and in Addis Ababa and a plan is set to complete the task within one year.

According to Kinfe, the 13 million Euros budget that is required to the installation of automated meteorological devices is secured from the Finnish government in the form of long-term concessional loans.

He further stated that the installing devices help to get timely data on weather related issues, to prevent disaster by providing early warnings, and to offer relevant information to beneficiaries, particularly farmers.

Experts are in the training to keep the devices and systems functional and to handle possible malfunctions easily without bringing foreign professionals. To facilitate more training and other capacity-building programs, the institute is working closely with the Space Science and the Ministry of Innovation and Technology.

"The installed radars will reach up to 250 km-radius circle of altitude and collect information about clouds, rainfall, and snow in the country. This helps to know and follow up places where disaster and floods are happening and enhances the early warning capacity, the deputy director

general elaborated.

Moreover, Ethiopia has 17 stations that record the country's weather condition and climate information in every three hours and exchange the data with the World Meteorological Organization (WMO).

To make the data exchange with the WMO more frequent and accessible, efforts are underway to expand the air condition stations to 29.

Ethiopia is also working in cooperation with IGAD and World Meteorology Agency to provide accessible and reliable weather forecasting service, Kinfere marked.

## Abbay Dam construction...

the need to carry out extensive afforestation activities in the Abbay basin that would extend the project's lifetime.

"By the same token, Ethiopians and foreigners of Ethiopian origin in the Diaspora have been extending

continuous support to the dam since its launching and the government's public diplomacy activity is making success in initiating those people."

Meanwhile, Aregawi commended the government's meticulous diplomatic

approach that enabled to create a joint and multilateral cooperation for equitable use of Nile waters. "In spite of Egyptian politicians' greedy stance, other Nile riparian countries are embracing Ethiopia's initiation of equitability."



# Opinion

## Supply side economics and labor mobility

BY GETACHEW MINAS

Ethiopia has been implementing several economic policies to promote growth and development. These policies have included some factors of supply-side economics. Supply-side economics maintains that the supply of goods and services is the engine of economic growth. It advocates tax cuts as a means to encourage job creation, business expansion and entrepreneurial activities. Tax cuts for investors gives them incentives to save and invest, creating economic benefits that trickles down into the economy at large.

The three pillars of supply-side economics are tax policy, regulatory policy, and monetary policy. The major point of the policy is that production/supply is more important than demand in determining economic growth. However, the effectiveness and specific implementations of this policy requires determination on the part of government, investors and other stakeholders. Government entities responsible for economic policy and implementation in Ethiopia should, therefore, be well-versed with supply-side economics.

Generally speaking, they should focus on infrastructural, industrial, agricultural and services sectors development. Infrastructure is a very crucial support for the development of other sectors. Ethiopia has been heavily investing in infrastructure projects in the past. These projects include roads, railways, airports, and energy facilities. These are designed for improving the productive capacity of the country. They help in reducing the costs of doing business, which is a critical aspect of supply-side economics. Also, industrialization is a strategic sector for driving economic growth and development.

The Ethiopian governments have been working to improve and enhance the manufacturing sector to create employment opportunities and increase the productive capacity of enterprises that boost economic growth. The governments issued policies on tax incentives and subsidies to encourage firms to engage in the production of goods and services for the domestic and external markets.

Production for export generates foreign exchange with which Ethiopia imports basic inputs needed by the industrial and agricultural sectors. The industrial sector needs machineries and spare-parts as well as new technologies for the manufacture of goods that compete in the global market. It also needs highly qualified and skilled workers to raise its productivity and profitability. This sector may expand and generate more output and employment opportunities for the labor force.

The foreign exchange earned by the export of manufactured goods should be utilized productively to generate more employment

and income. Of course, the country does not afford to import luxury goods that contribute nothing to the economy. There should be strong and honest customs officers to check the import of luxury goods that waste the hard-earned foreign exchange of the country. Investors deserve special attention by the customs officials to be protected against fake imports that compete with domestically produced goods and services.

Supply-side economic policy may encourage the development of special economic zones to attract investment in the various sectors of the economy. Agriculture has a major share in the Ethiopian economy. It has a high probability of productivity that attracts investors. These investors make efforts to enhance agricultural productivity through the adoption of technology provided that the government of Ethiopia provides financial and other incentives. It may invest in infrastructure development that provides access to markets, which can be taken as supply-side measure. These measures are aimed at increasing input, output and efficiency in the agricultural sector. In these endeavors, the local investment has to be accompanied by foreign investment. This demands investment promotion abroad. Ethiopia has been actively encouraging foreign and domestic investment. It has been offering incentives to businessmen to invest in various sectors of the economy.

The incentives provided to investors include tax breaks, regulations that promote investment, and support for the transfer of technology. These efforts need to be aligned with supply-side principles and policies. Related to these measures is education and skills development undertaken by the government and the private sectors. In this regard, supply-side policy emphasizes the importance of human capital development.

In the past, Ethiopia has been investing in education and skills training programs to equip its labor force with the necessary skills. These skills development programs have to provide relevant knowledge on how to contribute to economic growth, development and innovation. These programs may provide for the teaching staff, training materials development and technical centers that are known for their high standards. These standards ensure that trainees are provided relevant skills and knowledge for improving productivity at the workplace.

Sector development requires reforms in the financial sector. Improvements in the financial sector, such as improved access to credit and capital markets, are essential for facilitating investment. Efficient financial sector is critical for facilitating entrepreneurship, which is one of the key components of supply-side economics. In line with the financial sector development, there is a need to have a policy of trade liberalization.

Opening up the economy to international trade may enhance competition. It may also prompt and stimulate innovation and use of new tech. These measures enhance efficiency and effectiveness which are consistent with supply-side economics. Ethiopia has been known for pursuing trade liberalization policies which is consistent with regional and global markets. Integration with these markets demands careful analyses of political, economic and social studies that promote the interest of the country.

Experts, however, give special attention to the serious issues Ethiopia is faced with. There are various challenges, including political instability, that affect the socioeconomic situations of the country. In Ethiopia there are political apprehensions including ethnic tensions that seriously affect economic interactions. These tensions have lead to skirmishes, clashes and conflicts that affected production and supply-chains.

Also, these social tensions have negative impacts on the effectiveness of infrastructure on supply-side activities. The success of such activities depends on the implementation capacity of responsible institutions. The country's institutional capacity and external factors such as global economic conditions are determinants of successful achievement. Thus, supply-side measures are part of the economic strategy of Ethiopia. Of course, their impact and success may vary over time.

In any production system, the input of skilled labor is very critical for the success of enterprises. In particular, labor mobility enables individuals to move between different occupations within and between industries. In so doing, they choose the occupations to which they are qualified. These occupations are related to industries in which they enhance productivity. Workers move not only from one occupation or industry to another, but they also change their geographical locations in search of employment opportunities.

Mobility is, therefore, a key aspect of labor market dynamics and has significant implications for economic efficiency. It enhances productivity that leads to better income and individual well-being. Moreover, there are some benefits that originate from labor mobility and these include efficient allocation of resources. The mobility of workers allows for the efficient placement of human resources across various sectors of the economy. It allows workers to move from losing industries to those with higher margin of profit and better opportunities. This results in reallocating resources to industries where they are most needed.

High mobility of labor may help in reducing unemployment by allowing the labor force to quickly move between occupations. In the process, they may find employment opportunities that match their

skills and preferences. This flexibility can help minimize the negative effects of economic changes and structural impacts in the labor market. When the labor force is able to move between jobs, industries may utilize its skills and abilities. In the process, the overall labor productivity tends to increase.

Labor movements facilitate the matching of workers with the most suitable jobs. This leads to greater efficiency and effectiveness that increase output. Mobility of labor improves the flow of ideas, knowledge, and best practices across different industries and regions in Ethiopia. Workers who move between industries or regions introduce new ideas, experiences, skills and techniques. This fosters innovations that drive economic growth and development. Labor mobility may minimize regional differences in employment opportunities, income and living standards that enable workers to move to areas with better job opportunities and higher wages. This may lead to a more balanced regional development thereby reducing geographical differences and inequalities.

Workers who are capable of moving between occupations and industries usually gain different experiences and skills. This enhances the development of human capital in Ethiopia. This rise in the quality of skills and knowledge benefits individuals and strengthens the overall labor force of the economy. As mentioned earlier, labor mobility provides employers with a larger pool of candidates to fill vacancies. It increases flexibility in allowing firms to respond to the changing market conditions.

The placement of individuals in jobs that fit with their skills, choices, and careers may reduce mismatches in the labor market. In the process, shortage of skills and underemployment may be reduced. Generally, labor mobility has a key role in improving economic mobility and prosperity by enabling the efficient utilization of labor. It is also useful in facilitating the adaption of the work force to changing economic conditions.

Also, problems such as barriers to mobility have to be controlled. Labor immobility due to shortage of houses and difficulties in access to opportunities may hinder the realization of these benefits. Ethiopian often seeks to address these challenges through measures that promote labor mobility, including improvement in the quality of education and training. It is also critical to reduce barriers to investment and employment creation in various sectors of the Ethiopian economy.

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



# Editorial

## Credible, inclusive National Dialogue for lasting peace

Ethiopians from all walks of life have long been speaking loudly about the necessity of conducting inclusive national reconciliation with an aim to bringing about national unity and shifting attention towards development. It is fully comprehended by many; if not all in all, the nation's development can come true predominantly through the full participation of its citizens regardless of their whereabouts and differences. To this end, resolving misunderstandings created between peoples that become source of conflicts including armed struggles in various parts of the country as we can see today should be primary issue.

Without any hesitation, reaching on common understanding on basic national issues is core agenda for Ethiopians to stand together for the country's development. This in turn necessitates solving problems via identifying the problems and carrying out thorough discussion.

Cognizant to this fact, the Ethiopian government established National Dialogue Commission (NDC) with the mission to resolve differences of opinion on fundamental issues and forge a 'national consensus'. Up on its establishment in December 2021, the commission was given three years to accomplish these goals.

As universally understood, National Dialogues are official forums typically convened to address issues of national concern – often long-standing causes of conflict that have been brought to the fore by political protest or armed insurrection. Over the last 25 years, there have been numerous National Dialogues globally, taking place in a multitude of political contexts, and with a broad range of forms and sizes, aims, and goals.

National Dialogues proven particularly effective when it comes to addressing inter-state conflicts with a multiplicity of stakeholders. National Dialogues therefore have mandates that include political reforms, constitution-making, and peace building. Credibility and inclusivity of the national dialogue, in this regard is a fundamental criteria.

Asking the Commissions accomplishment so far and remaining tasks ahead is a must as the commission is left with only less than a year to conduct the actual dialogue as per the time table.

And speaking to the Ethiopian Press Agency, recently, NDC Chief Commissioner, Mesfin Araya said that finalizing participants' identification in ten states, the commission is on the final stage of selecting woreda representatives who are to be involved in the agenda collection process.

The Commissioner further stated that the agenda collection is to be implemented in the areas where the primary activities are fully completed. Accordingly, stakeholders along with the representatives of each woreda are expected to table their agenda for discussion.

"The commission is ready to hold agenda collection progress in Addis Ababa, Gambella, Benishangul-Gumuz, Sidama, Harar and Dire Dawa. And, representatives drawn from each woreda are expected to gather and present worthy ideas to the commission," he said.

Stating the commission's core role in the due process, Prof. Mesfin underscored that trainings are given to some 106 instructors drawn from various universities and acquainted with the respective communities' culture and tradition to facilitate the process.

Conducting effective and time-bound dialogue in a country like Ethiopia that is home to population with ethnic and religious diversity that have undergone divisive narratives is not an easy task. Thus, support from concerned and capable bodies is needed. Ethiopians and friends of Ethiopia who are longing to see united and prosperous country should contribute to the success of the commission's effort.

Especially, Ethiopians inland and overseas are primarily duty bounded for its achievement. To deal with the major drivers of conflict in Ethiopia, the process must involve key actors across the political divide. Thus, all sections of the community; women, youth, self-help organizations, community leaders, public servants, teachers, artisans, and the business community including armed groups have to be given an opportunity to take part in the dialogue.

As the matter is wide and complicated, it needs bulk man power and huge finance. So, it is a timely question to the international community to stretch supportive hand in this regard to see the commission's effort bearing sounding outcome in bringing Ethiopia's problems to an end.

# Opinion

## How does GERD relate to Agenda 2063?

BY SOLOMON DIBABA

Agenda 2063 not only considers Africa's continental growth aspirations but acknowledges that for the whole continent to develop the premise of Agenda 2063 must be adopted at regional and country level. At the inception of Agenda 2063, the National Development Plans of Member States were as well as the strategic plans of the Regional Economic Communities were reviewed and the focus areas of their development priorities have been included in the First Ten Year Implementation Plan to ensure that their priorities in the near term converge with the priority areas contained in the 50 year framework document.

According to AU programmatic vision in terms of output, regional power pools boosted by at least 50 % increase in power generation and the INGA dam will be operational and will contribute to the powering of the industrial transformation of the continent and comfort of the citizenry.

Sustainable development goals item 7, provides ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all. In both cases, GERD has already been geared up to contributing an important role in developing African energy needs to a greater extent.

Advocating for absolute ownership and use of the Blue Nile waters by Egypt and Sudan is therefore not in line with both the development objectives of the AU, Agenda 2063 and item 7 of the SDG.

The contribution that GERD can render in economic pan Africanism to the member countries of the AU perfectly falls in line with the development objectives of the continent and is part of the economic integration and power sharing scheme for which GERD is being constructed.

GERD fulfils the continental vision of using continental resources right in Africa. While Egypt uses its position in the Arab League focusing on pan Arabism, Ethiopia will soon complete the biggest dam in Africa as a tool for promoting pan Africanism.

It is regrettable to observe that the natural resources of Africa have become a bone of contention between the western powers who compete among themselves to extract the mineral resources of African countries by instigating conflicts. The situation in the DRC is a good example for this.

Mention any natural resource and Africa has it. What is lacking is a strong and sustained economic integration among the countries and sharing resources that could be used for continental economic development.

When it comes to economic pan Africanism, AfCFTA is already in the making to promote trade and economic integration between African countries.

According to the IMF Africa ranks near the bottom when it comes to competing in the global economy, held back by fragmented markets that inhibit efficiency and constrain economic growth.

Now a new player is emerging with the potential to defragment Africa and boost the productivity of its economies: the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). In March 2018, 44 African heads of state signed a framework to establish a single continental market for goods and services, with free movement of capital and business travelers. Five additional countries, including South Africa,

joined in July. The AfCFTA still needs ratification by the parliaments of at least 22 countries; seven have done so thus far.

In addition to increasing market efficiency and reducing the cost of doing business by offering opportunities for economies of scale, the AfCFTA could ease trade and investment flows and shift the composition and direction of foreign direct investment flows into Africa.

The African Continental Free Trade Area, a flagship project of Agenda 2063 aimed at creating a single African market which creates world's largest free trade area by bringing together the 55 countries with a population of about 1.3 billion and a combined GDP of approximately 3.4 trillion USD, was launched two years ago. GERD is an important input not only for promoting economic integration but also to provide the necessary renewable hydroelectric power supply for accelerating free trade among the African countries.

The free trade area is intent on enhancing trade cooperation of African signatory countries by gradually reducing tariffs and other tax related challenges.

Ethiopia has been making preparations to engage in implementation of the trade agreement with a view to ensuring its benefits by diversifying export products.

Government of Ethiopia has carried out various activities, including expansion of infrastructures, identification export product items and pricing of products, among other.

Accordingly, the product tariffs prepared based on study was recently approved by the Council of African Ministers of Trade.

Negotiations on tariffs of imported products have also been underway with member countries. Ethiopia joins AfCFTA possessing energy resources as an important commodity in free trade with fellow African countries by trading energy needed for their industries.

"Some 48 countries have submitted tariffs of their goods and products. Ethiopia also submitted respective tariff offers and it has been accepted by the African trade ministers. AfCFTA is a great opportunity for Ethiopia as it helps the country to reach the markets of 1.3 billion people by using various logistics infrastructures, including the Ethiopian Airlines."

According to the minister, the implementation of AfCFTA is underway with trial levels in 10 African countries. Ethiopia will also commence implementing the agreement within a few months.

The countries with which the trial implementation of AfCFTA agreement would be carried out and the type of products to be traded will be decided in the future through bilateral negotiations and other discussions.

The contribution that GERD can provide to AfCFTA is not limited only to the energy sector. GERD is to become an excellent location for the development of tourism and hospitality industry globally and particularly for the promotion of African tourism. Thus, the dam is to become a tool for friendship among nations and more particularly among the African nations.

As the author has repeatedly stressed, GERD is a showcase for cultural and educational exchange between African countries and their educational institutions.

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



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### Office of the CEO

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

### Advertisement and Dist. Department

email: etpresspromotion@gmail.com  
Tel. 011-156-98-73/011-811-13-15  
Telegram :- 0976084707 - press  
Editor-in-Chief: Worku Belachew  
email- workubelachew@press.et  
Address- Nifas Silk Lafto Sub-city  
Woreda - 05, House No----  
Tel- +251 111 26 41 98

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

### Deputy Editors-in-Chief:

Alem Hailu  
Elizabeth Mengistu  
Zekarias Woldemariam  
Desta Geberehiwot  
Daniel Beyene

Website: www.press.et  
email: ethiopianherald@press.et  
Fb//Ethiopian Press Agency/  
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# Art & Culture

## Every ounce counts, matters!

BY MENGESHA AMARE

Many wait for others,  
For serenity or peace,  
To breathe a sigh of relief,  
And to lead a happy life,  
But they themselves are responsible,  
To make things quite possible,  
Yes,  
Every ounce of peace matters,  
But the question is,  
Where this yummy meal of mind emanates from,  
Addis Ababa, Toronto, Paris, Moscow or Rome,  
Who also beats against it a drum,  
A combatant, an artist, a minister, journalist or  
groom,  
Who spoils it or who can nurture,  
Are animals, human beings or nature?  
Most definitely,  
Even quite surely,  
Nature has thus provided people, all human race,  
With stability or absolute peace,  
Conversely most, human sense of jealousy,  
Self-centered character,

Greedy and bossy future,  
Diabolic spirit and worthless counter,  
Sly approach,  
Power monger posture,  
Make compatriots, innocent citizens,  
Fellow relatives all the time restless,  
Pretty destitute, dead and even homeless,  
If one is committed to have clear mind,  
Eager to recover and find,  
What is blessed and good?  
Thinking out of self-box,  
Simple to the crux,  
To locally, nationally, even globally create peace,  
As peace is equal with air, food  
And all life necessities,  
Every ounce of peace matters!  
Prettily counts,  
Then life happily persists.  
Via converting the heinous into blessings!!!



## Hope anew

BY MIKELOL

Ethiopia's prosperity blooms along the  
corridor,  
As development paves the way for a  
brighter tomorrow,  
With government commitment shining  
through,  
Reinnovative tasks bring hope anew.  
In the heart of the nation's pride,  
Public joy swells with the rising tide,  
As progress weaves a tapestry of  
dreams,  
In the vibrant landscape of Ethiopia's  
streams.  
Let us celebrate this journey of growth,  
As Ethiopia's story unfolds,  
With each step forward, we embrace  
the unknown,  
And witness the seeds of prosperity  
sown.

## When two people marry

BY HELEN STINER RICE

Your hearts are filled with happiness  
So great and overflowing  
You can't comprehend it,  
For it's beyond all knowing  
How any heart could hold such joy  
Or feel the fullness of  
The wonders and glory  
And the ecstasy of love.  
You wish that you could capture it  
And never let it go  
So, you might walk forever  
In its magic, radiant glow,  
But, love in all its ecstasy  
Is such a fragile thing,  
Like gossamer in cloudless skies  
Or humming birds small wing...  
But love that lasts forever  
Must be made of something strong\_  
That kind of strength that's gathered  
When the heart can hear no song  
When the sunshine of your wedding day  
Runs into stormy weather,  
And hand in hand you brave the gale  
And climb steep hills together  
And, cling to each other  
While the thunder rolls above,  
You seek divine protection



In faith and hope and love...  
For days of Vine and roses  
Never make love's dream  
To come true—  
It takes sacrifices and tear drops  
And problems shared by two  
To give true love  
Is beauty,  
Its grandeur and its fineness,  
And to mold an earthly ecstasy  
Into heavenly divines.



## Law & Politics

# Backing the noble causes of the National Dialogue Commission

BY FITSUM GETACHEW

Some critics of Ethiopia's current political landscape say that it is not as wide and all encompassing as they would like to. They are often heard accusing the government of denying them their rights to oppose it and campaign against it with all their force. The government on the other hand states that the political landscape has never been wider and more accommodating of all political forces and the formation of a National Dialogue Commission a few years ago is also another demonstration of its good faith to talk with any political force and address any outstanding issue that pertains to the keeping the country peaceful and stable avoiding all sorts of violence and armed campaigns. The Commission has been inviting every political force in the country from all sorts of ideological spectrums and engages in frank and open discussions. But the critics continue to present their dissent to the way things are proceeding in the country attributing the main responsibility to the position and policies of the ruling party. They continue to allege that the government uses its massive force and does not show any sign of compromise to the demands these forces seem to present.

According to the National Dialogue Commission there is need to put aside every form of armed struggle, abandon the policy of using force to oppose the incumbent and be prepared to present their case in peaceful talks and frank discussions with the government. The Chief Commissioner of the National Dialogue Commission Professor Mesfin Araya was reported as saying recently that continuing to engage in violence and hostilities has only caused the deaths and injuries of our own people and the devastation of what a war begets. The Commissioner said it is our own folks who are dying on any side of the conflict and we should put an end to it giving way to peaceful discussions and talks to iron out our differences.

The Commissioner has said more or less 'We want to finish our job of tabling all inclusive dialogues and talks between all parties in the three years which have been allocated to us, and with the continuous obstacles we constantly face such as the absence of peace in certain parts of the country, the lack of security for our staff and the people who want to take part in the discussions, we have not been able to reach every corner of the nation and carry out our duties the way we would like to. He said this has created a huge barrier and we call upon all parties to refrain from violence and come to the table of negotiations and try and settle every

outstanding issue peacefully.

He said we cannot continue to fight each other and what we lose is our own children for the assertion of our claims and rights, things which can be achieved in peaceful ways. The Commissioner said the activities of the Commission are being hampered by these ongoing hostilities in certain parts of the country and the consequence is absence of enduring peace and stability.

The objective of the National Dialogue Commission is to bring together all political groups and forces both formal and informal to one center and hold open and candid discussions based on the Constitution and then track the new trajectory of the country together.

Ethiopia has had enough of hostilities carried out between and among its own citizens for decades and what the National Dialogue Commission is trying to do is change this ugly and tragic tradition and open a new chapter of frank and truthful discussions that could result in a working and peacefully operating democracy. We have seen that other nations have passed through such dynamic phases of socio-political movements and the ultimate solution has been discussion and resolution of the issues and not continuous fratricidal conflicts.

There are indications that the current state of Ethiopia is becoming difficult for settling differences in a peaceful manner because of certain die hard extremist views sustained by certain groups. Many political forces seem to have continued to adopt the way of armed struggle to claim and assert their legitimate rights. But this has been proved that it is not a viable method of settling differences because there could be no viable and sustainable or permanent solution to Ethiopia's problems using violence as a means. One side may feel to have won and probably grab power but the appearance of peace is only a resemblance because it would not take long before the side which felt defeated in the struggle would rise again in opposition. This would put the country in a kind of vicious circle with no end to instability and violence. The only lasting solution to problems such as the ones that exist in Ethiopia is an all encompassing, all inclusive discussion in a peaceful and frank manner and iron out the basic differences leaving aside the minor ones that have little import in the general discussion. Agreements on the principal issues are sufficient to push ahead the country.

In the National Dialogue Commission, every political force is assured of having the opportunity to present their case and

discuss in an atmosphere of frankness and peace without any threats of use of force or violence.

The losses coming from hostilities have been staggering as the recent conflict in the north has shown us. We have reached a stage of history in which the age of asserting rights through violence and armed struggle must now be dismissed as outdated and impracticable. The losses are too big to sustain and this is totally counterproductive by every calculation to all sides.

Ethiopia has had the experience of losing so much during the various political forces fighting the monarchy first then followed during the Derg military government and even now during the EPRDF and post EPRDF government. It does not need to refer to outside experiences because it has lived it on its own territory. Reports have been written about how the guerrilla activities first and then the outright 'war of liberation' of the northern forces have resulted in untold suffering and destruction of the people of the country for years. And yet the problem could and should have been resolved or settled in a peaceful manner by tabling frank and open talks about how to move ahead regarding whatever ideological issues may arise and any issue of self-determination of the various nationalities of Ethiopia could be raised. Because of the categorical and uncompromising positions of the various political forces the country had to engage in a cycle of interminable hostilities and fights that has resulted in massive losses on all parts. This is because we have not been able to pause for a moment and ponder on how to settle our differences in a peaceful manner engaging in fruitful conversations. This happens when political forces are rigid and not compromising enough to the principles of give and take. Compromise and concessions must not have been discarded in any political discussion.

Even in the recent fighting in the north of the country we have experienced the same procedures of engaging in protracted violence trying to force our ways to solutions. We were forced to use our scarce and precious national assets and wealth to keep intact the unity and integrity of the nation. In a conflict that lasted two years a lot of destruction has happened, lots of people were sacrificed in the hostilities and much of the country's resources had to be redirected for the war efforts from their usual development allocations. Projects had to be halted and in the process the economic activities of the country were deeply and negatively affected.

As a poor country the world was right criticizing us for such waste and

ultimately it was the Pretoria peace talks that resulted in the cessation of hostilities and a ceasefire was declared. This can be cited as another clear example of non existence of lasting solutions for political problems through force and violence. The idea of subjecting others through fire power cannot last long and be a guarantee of lasting peace and stability. This means that the only means of reaching a political solution is through peaceful discussions around a table.

Ethiopians need to learn from past experiences and mistakes and try and adopt a new direction and a new method of resolving any disputed issues and make it a regular practice and tradition. We need to embrace a new mentality of settling our differences through peaceful exchanges of talks and discussions. In this respect the formation of the National Dialogue Commission could be a good beginning in this process, a good practice to be strengthened and encouraged. All armed groups, all political forces, both formal and informal, should try and change their age old mentality of trying to depose an incumbent through rebellion and armed struggle because this process has resulted in too much loss and destruction which results in an unsustainable situation. It would only lead the country in to chaos. The recent experience of the country has confirmed to us that this is the only probable outcome.

Ethiopia cannot afford to sustain such losses any more because the economic fallouts have become too high and the suffering of the citizens can hardly be justified when there are alternatives to armed conflict and confrontation. That is why we say all the avenues of trying to solve the current political issues of the country should be determined by peaceful discussions based on certain accepted ground rules by all parties.

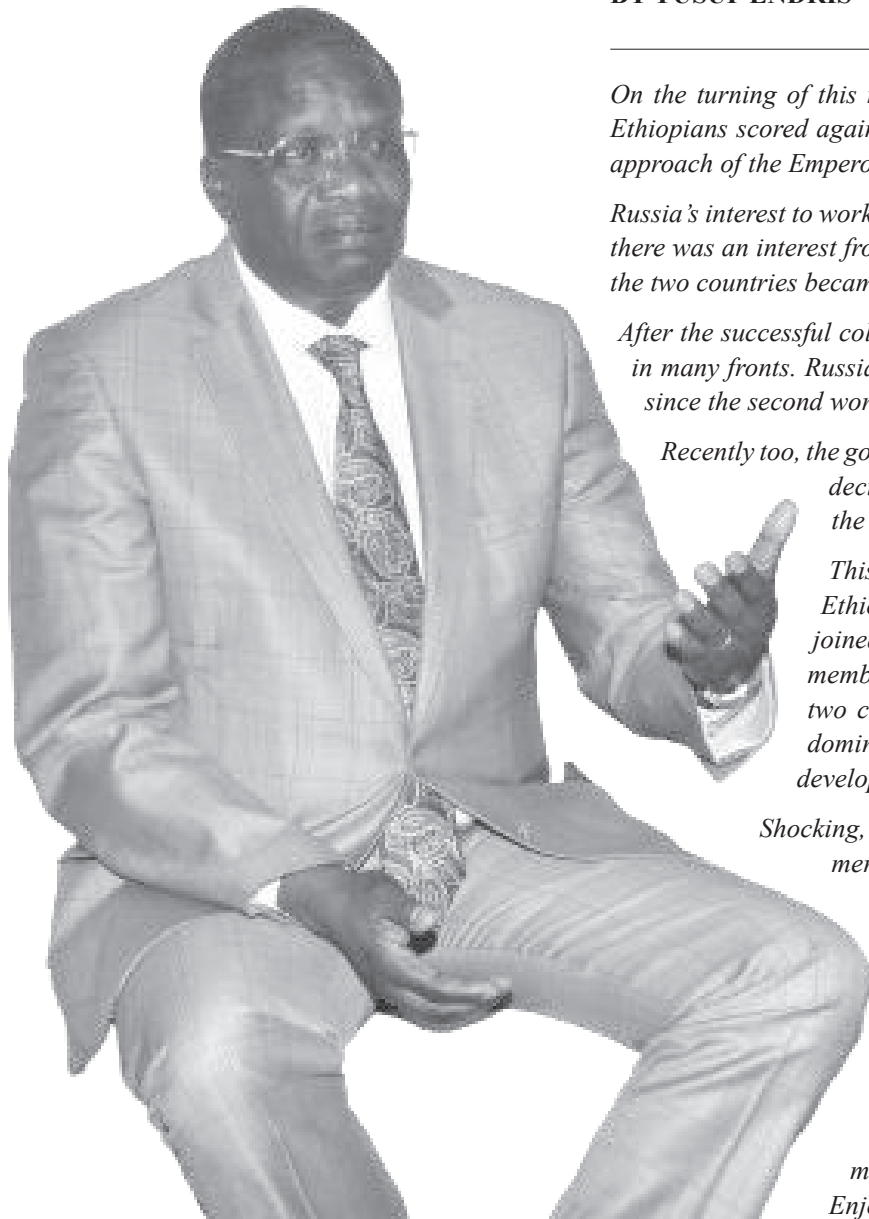
The situation of diffidence and suspicion should be eliminated and there should be trust and confidence in the process that could eventually lead to durable peace. All political forces should have confidence in the National Dialogue Commission and take part in the discussions presenting their case in a candid manner. Lately the Commission has trained scores of academics from university staff to lead the discussions among the people. The government has promised that it will accept the outcome of the discussions and engage in implementing the results. This should be taken as a new beginning for the country and it needs it in urgency because the period of uncertainties and suspicions should stop and find a lasting solution. Economies can thrive only in peaceful and stable conditions.



# Ethiopia's joining BRICS would render multiples of benefits

*Ambassador Cham Ugala Uriat*

BY YUSUF ENDRIS



*On the turning of this month Ethiopians celebrated the 128th Anniversary of the Victory at Adwa, which Ethiopians scored against the invading Italian forces. Added to the heroism of the people is the diplomatic approach of the Emperor Menelik II. One of the countries that stood by the side of Ethiopia was Russia.*

*Russia's interest to work with Ethiopia in shared security matters dates back to the 16th century during which there was an interest from both sides to join hands and fight against common enemies. The alliance between the two countries became more practical since the Battle of Adwa.*

*After the successful collaboration at the battle of Adwa, Ethiopia and Russia have also continued their ties in many fronts. Russia has shown solidarity with Ethiopia when the latter was occupied by foreign forces since the second world war, during the cold war ...etc.*

*Recently too, the government of Russia has shown due support to protect Ethiopia from the possible unjust decisions that were planned to be imposed by the UN Security Council in connection with the two years of war in the north of Ethiopia.*

*This is only one of the diverse sectors of collaboration between the two countries. Now Ethiopia and Russia are on a more suitable platform for collaboration as Ethiopia has joined the BRICS Plus bloc, in which Russia is at the fore front of its formation. Ethiopia's membership in the BRICS + is believed to shore up the bilateral relations between the two countries as well as set momentum for changing the existing world order which is dominated by few countries of the west, as well as to avail many economic benefit to developing countries.*

*Shocking, Russia has faced one of the worst hits of terrorism in its recent history. Armed members of terrorist groups have launched barbaric attack inside a city hall killing ... people. Countries across the world including Ethiopia have denounced the attack and shown concern and solidarity with Russia and the global community against terrorism.*

*As one of the long time victims of terrorism, Ethiopia also reaffirmed its commitment to fight against terrorism, beef up global peace and security.*

*Ethiopian Press Agency has recently held an interview with Ethiopian Ambassador to Russia, Cham Ugala Uriat on the overall Ethiopia and Russia relations, Ethiopia's membership in BRICS Plus as well as the need to work hand in hand against terrorism. Enjoy reading!*

## Could you provide us with your reflection on the recent terror attack in Moscow?

As you may know, the heinous terrorist attack that has killed more than 133 and wounded so many innocent Russian citizens was occurred at Crocus City Hall complex near Moscow. The Security Services of the Russian Federation done all necessary efforts possible and detained scores of suspects including four terrorists who have participated in the shooting directly at the incident.

## How do you perceive the impact of this attack on global peace?

As we may all agree, any act of terrorism taken in any place in the world, should be perceived as an evil act against humanity. These kind of attacks are threats to security and peace of all nations around the world. The impact of the incident that has happened at Crocus City Hall is not only on the Russian Federation, but it will affect global peace in one way or the other.

In your opinion, what measures should be taken (globally) to enhance security cooperation? And, between Ethiopia and

**Ethiopia's** membership in the BRICS + is believed to shore up the bilateral relations between the two countries as well as set momentum for changing the existing world order which is dominated by few countries of the west, as well as to avail many economic benefit to developing countries



continued from page 8

## Ethiopia's joining BRICS would...

### Russia in light of such incidents?

In my candid opinion, all nations around the globe should work collectively in order to enhance cooperation among themselves as terrorism attacks do know no borders between the countries. A terrorist attack in one country, in one way or other, will have impact on other countries across the borders and the fact that nobody is certainly immune from this evil act, it is imperative for the nations of the world to strength their cooperation and pull together their resources to enable fight this common enemy effectively. In light of the incident that occurred in Moscow, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and Ethiopian Embassy in Moscow, have already expressed their respective sympathies and condolences to the bereaved families, the Government and People of the Russian Federation. The two sisterly countries are working closely to strengthen their cooperation on many issues including security matters.

### How do you envision the international community's response to this act of terrorism, and what role can Ethiopia play in fostering a coordinated response?

Frankly speaking, even though there may be some hostilities and political differences among some countries around the world, I do sincerely believe that it would be inhuman to celebrate the loss of the precious lives of innocent people. In this regard, the international community including our country has responded enormously in condemning this heinous act against the citizens of the Russian Federation.

### Looking ahead, what are your hopes and priorities for strengthening bilateral cooperation between Ethiopia and Russia in addressing security threats?

As I have tried to mention above, Ethiopia and Russian Federation have a long lasting and cordial diplomatic relations. The two sisterly countries have been working closely to strengthen their cooperation at bilateral and Multilateral levels. Both of them have already sort out the areas of cooperation and signed many agreements on different issues of common interest including security sector. The two countries have strong will and interest in addressing security threats at global level in general, and the Horn of Africa, in particular.

Recently Ethiopia became a member of BRICS, what is expected in the near future?

As we know all, the members of BRICS were only five. Primarily, there were four Russia, China, India, and Brazil. Later on, South Africa joined the group and increased the number of members to five. As of January this year, five countries including Ethiopia already joined the group. When we see BRICS in terms of population, it holds over 40 percent of the world. The two member countries are known for their huge population. Russia, Brazil and the newly



joined members such as Ethiopia have huge population. In this regard, BRICS will be a big market for Ethiopia.

### How can Ethiopia and Russia cooperate specially under the framework of BRICS?

BRICS has three pillars which are peace and security, economy and finance and culture and people to people relations. We had historic relations with Russia. Ethiopia is a country that has never been colonized and many years of diplomatic relations. Thus, the two countries have old aged bilateral relations in terms of politics and diplomacy. The two countries also have social relations in various aspects. As you know it, there is a Pushkin center in the capital. This way we have strong bilateral relations with Russia. When you see interreligious relations, there is a strong bond between Russia and Ethiopia orthodox churches. They also established a consultation platform. Last year, for instance, delegates of Russian religious fathers came and celebrated Timket at Gonder. This year also about 21 Russian Orthodox Church Choirs came and celebrated Meskal (the finding of true cross) through presenting religious' songs.

If we take two countries relations in education sector, numerous students were

able to pursue their higher education here when the country was part of the former Soviet Union. They are now serving the country having different positions with the knowledge acquired from the former Soviet Union. Even though it is equivalent with the previous days, there are over 100 Ethiopians who are studying civil and military education in today's Russia.

Aside from that, we need to do more in our economic relations. We have now decided to begin tasks in the three core economic sectors such as Investment, tourism and trade. These three include the priority areas in BRICS. So, BRICS creates another opportunity to do these.

Another point that manifest the growth of cooperation is, during the Russia –Africa summit, our Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed visited Russia. He paid official visit just before the summit, met president Putin and talked about the bilateral relations. And they signed five new and additional agreements. It was successful visit.

In order to enhance minimal trade relations, Ethiopian airlines fly to Russia four times a week. As per the agreement, Ethiopian airlines have also commenced cargo service. It is expected to increase its volume. This cargo service conveys our products to Russia market and vice versa. So, joining BRICS for Ethiopia is not an easy feat.

As I tried to elaborate earlier, by being member of BRICS, Ethiopia would gain wide ranging market access for its products. On the other hand, BRICS member countries have better capacity in terms of technology and innovation. So, through BRICS we can have the opportunity to gain technology. In terms of expanding tourism, China, for instance, is a source of tourism. Russians prefer to go to Egypt and Tanzania from African countries. The effort to make Ethiopia a hub of tourist destination, it widens the opportunity to attract Russian tourists.

BRICS has its own Bank called New Development Bank that avails finance for development. So we have to search ways of being member of this bank.

### One of the areas of agreement between the two countries is energy. Would you elaborate its progress please?

Energy is a big sector of agreement between the two countries. Russia is one of the countries that generate nuclear energy. In Africa, they have already started nuclear project in Egypt. The agreement we reach is make use of Nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. As per the agreement, the nuclear power plant would be established for development. There is a keen interest from the Russian side to start the job and we are also facilitating the process on our side.

Thank you very much for your time!

My pleasure!

**When we see BRICS in terms of population, it holds over 40 percent of the world. The two member countries are known for their huge population. Russia, Brazil and the newly joined members such as Ethiopia have huge population. In this regard, BRICS will be a big market for Ethiopia**

# Society



Ethiopian endemic Enset tree.

## Harnessing Enset's potentials to ensure food security

BY TEWODROS KASSA

Ethiopia being home to the second largest population in Africa has been working tirelessly to boost its agricultural production and productivity. The country grows diversified crop species as it embraces diverse climate condition.

The Ethiopian endemic *Enset* crop is one of the significant crops that play a crucial role in providing food security for millions of people in Ethiopia. *Enset* is a perennial crop that is native to Ethiopia and is commonly referred to as “false banana” due to its resemblance to the banana tree. *Enset* has been a staple food crop in Ethiopia for centuries, particularly in the southern and southwestern parts of the country.

*Enset* is a highly resilient crop that can withstand drought, pests, and diseases, making it an essential crop in regions with harsh weather conditions. The crop is also highly adaptable to different soil types, making it suitable for cultivation in various parts of the country. The *Enset* tree is not only a source of food but also a source of income for many households in Ethiopia. *Enset* is rich in nutrients, and its various parts are used for different purposes. The edible part of the *Enset* plant is its underground stem or corm, which is rich in carbohydrates and dietary fiber. The corm is harvested and processed into a starchy food product known as “*kocho*,” which is a staple food in many parts of Ethiopia.

Moreover, the *Enset* leaves are also used for wrapping food and making cooking utensils and baskets. *Enset* plays a crucial role in food security in Ethiopia, particularly in regions where other crops may not thrive. The crop is highly drought-resistant, making it a reliable source of food even in times of drought.

*Enset* has also been found to be effective in soil conservation, as it has a deep root system that helps to prevent soil erosion.

Recently, the Royal Botanic Gardens Kew Plant diversity and conservation researchers

stressed the paramount importance of *Enset*'s resilience to ensure Ethiopia's food security and combat future climate impact challenges.

*Enset*, which is also known as Ethiopian banana or false banana, has remarkable versatility, drought resistance, and disease tolerance. It is a staple source of nutrition for more than 20 million people in Ethiopia.

Research leader in Trait Diversity and

Function at Royal Botanic Gardens Kew James Borrell told local media that Ethiopia is one of the most remarkable countries for its agro biodiversity and crop diversity as well as linguistic and cultural diversity.

Royal Botanic Gardens Kew, has been working for more than 40 years researching *Enset* crop, particularly in the aspects of drought and climate resilience, he said, and added “*Enset* is globally unique; Ethiopia should be so proud of this remarkable crop that was domesticated in the country,” he added.

“*Enset* is very unusual and you can harvest it at any time of the year. You can store and you can buffer seasonal food security. So, (if) we particularly think under climate change, *Enset* has a very important role to play. But, perhaps, historically it has been a little bit under researched. And we feel very grateful to have the opportunity to work together with many organizations in Ethiopia, Ethiopian Biodiversity Institute, Addis Ababa University (AAU), Gulele Botanical Garden to work together to understand the unique crop,” the researcher explained.

According to him, the Royal Botanic Gardens Kew has been undertaking researches over the past eight years to map the distribution of *Enset* and its drought resilience.

“We are also sequencing many hundreds of varieties of *Enset* with AAU to understand diversity within that amusing diversity of more than 1,500 different types of *Enset* plant. Within this diversity are varieties that will be tolerant of future climate change. We are working to try and describe that diversity... so that Ethiopia can meet the challenges of climate change,” Borrell noted.

Sophie Richards, who specialized in conservation, biodiversity analysis, GIS, and extinction risk at the Royal Botanic Gardens Kew, said on her part that Ethiopia is endowed with crop diversity and different types of *Enset*.

Stating that both researchers have visited 300 farms and spoke with farmers; she pointed

out the invaluable role played by Ethiopian farmers in agro biodiversity conservation.

“Many of the small holder farmers in Ethiopia have been providing an incredible service by maintaining high diversity *Enset* on their farms without reward, without benefit and it is a huge service for the country to adapt climate change in the future and provide resilience and food security,” she elaborated.

Researchers anticipate that with a high yield and resilience to long periods of drought, *Enset* could be a climate-smart crop for the future.

Despite its numerous benefits, *Enset* cultivation is facing several challenges. One of the major challenges is the lack of awareness and knowledge about the crop among farmers and policymakers. Many farmers are not aware of the crop's potential and its role in food security, and policymakers have not given it the attention it deserves despite its significant contribution to the country's economy. Another challenge facing *Enset* cultivation is the lack of access to markets and processing facilities.

Most *Enset* farmers rely on traditional processing methods, which are time-consuming and labor-intensive. This makes it difficult for them to produce *Enset* products on a large scale and sell them in the market. There is a need for investment in processing facilities and market linkages to help *Enset* farmers access wider markets and increase their income.

In sum, the Ethiopian endemic *Enset* tree plays a critical role in food security in Ethiopia. It is a highly resilient crop that can withstand harsh weather conditions, making it a reliable source of food in regions where other crops may not thrive. *Enset* cultivation, however, faces several challenges, including lack of awareness and knowledge, and limited access to markets and processing facilities. There is a need for increased investment in *Enset* cultivation and market linkages to help farmers access wider markets and increase their income.



# Verbatim and Caption



“The multifaceted development and modernization activities being carried out in Addis Ababa are even receiving appreciation internationally. There is sufficient evidence that these projects have been changing the face of the city and increased its economic and social activities,”

Mayor of Addis Ababa City Administration Adanech Abiebie

“

“The United States government is dedicated to assisting the implementation of Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (CoHA) DDR process and collaborating closely with Ethiopia to offer technical and diplomatic assistance in achieving a lasting peaceful resolution,”

”

Anne A. Witkovsky, the US Assistant Secretary of State Department’s Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations.



Ethiopia is the first African country that entered into an all-weather partnership with China and a model for the rest of the continent,

China’s Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa, Ambassador Xue Bing



“Discussions among all stakeholders are essential in bringing regional peace and security to expedite regional economic integration,”

Peace Minister Binalf Andualem



Published every Saturday in Cooperation with Armauer Hansen Research Institute

## Minister of Health Dr. Mekdes Daba visits AHRI

BY MENGISTEAB TESHOME

The Armauer Hansen Research Institute (AHRI) was honored to welcome the newly appointed Minister of Health, Dr. Mekdes Daba, on March 20, 2024. The visit aimed to provide an overview of AHRI’s work and discuss important issues related to biomedical research, product development, production under the auspices of healthcare.

The visit commenced with a warm welcoming session from Professor Afework Kassu, Director General of AHRI, flowed with introducing the purpose and agenda of the visit.

AHRI Director General Prof. Afework delivered a comprehensive presentation highlighting AHRI’s remarkable 54-year journey in biomedical research and development the challenges it passed through. He emphasized the institute’s new mandates, ongoing research activities, and the development and production initiatives undertaken by AHRI.

Following the general presentation, Dr. Mekdes Daba and her team, accompanied by senior officials and management members of AHRI, took a tour of the biomedical research laboratories, the new AHRI building, and the historical sites within the ALERT-AHRI Health Village. The visit is believed in provided an opportunity to witness firsthand the institute’s cutting-edge facilities and its contribution to scientific advancements.



Dr. Mekdes Daba and her team along with Professor Afework Kassu, Director General of AHRI (At the center of from right to left)

During discussions with AHRI’s management, Dr. Mekdes Daba expressed the importance of translating knowledge generated through research into actionable outcomes. She emphasized the need for aligning AHRI’s research efforts with the programs of the Ministry of Health (MoH) to ensure coherence and maximize impact. The Minister acknowledged AHRI’s significant scientific contributions to the international community and encouraged

the institute to actively participate in the national eradication program, particularly in addressing leprosy.

On the occasion Dr. Mekdes highlighted the value of robust evidence synthesis, such as meta-analysis and systematic reviews, in supporting evidence-informed decision-making. She emphasized the alignment of AHRI’s plans with the national agenda, particularly in critical areas identified by the Ministry of Health. The

minister also emphasized the importance of transitioning capacity-building training to online platforms for wider accessibility. Drawing on experience-sharing platforms from international organizations like the WHO Academy in France was seen as a valuable opportunity for insights and knowledge exchange.

She underlined that addressing the need for sustained research excellence; the Minister emphasized the importance of reducing the attrition rate of researchers and staff through effective grants hunting strategies.

Furthermore, she stressed the significance of product development and production, particularly in the field of vaccine and pharmaceutical manufacturing. The minister commended AHRI’s support for the ShieldVax project and emphasized the importance of local pharmaceutical production with a focus on quality and productivity. The minister highlighted the need to reassess and support Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP)-compliant pharmaceutical manufacturing industries to reach maturity.

Finally, the visit concluded on a positive note with both AHRI and the Ministry of Health expressing their commitment to engage in collaboration activities and strengthening the partnership between the two parties in fostering the advancement of biomedical research and pharmaceutical product development as well as production as part of healthcare in Ethiopia.



# Verbatim and Caption



“  
Ethiopia has laid a strong foundation for technological advancement by prioritizing legal frameworks, strategic planning, institutional development, telecom infrastructure expansion, the establishment of AI institutions, and efforts to address energy challenges,  
” Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed

“  
Muslims must console the poor and needy, show solidarity and unity during this month of Ramadan. The Muslim community should also consolidate unity, solidarity, and maintain peace in the community,  
”  
Islamic Affairs Supreme Council Head Haji Ibrahim Tufa



“  
The National Bank of Ethiopia would address the underrepresentation of women in leadership positions through the network and attain the goal of enhancing women’s financial inclusion,  
”  
Governor of NBE Mamo Mihretu



## Published Weekly in Collaboration with Addis Ababa Culture, Arts & Tourism Bureau

The Vibrant Hub of Africa



## AACATB launches annual language conference

BY DIRRIBA TESHOME

Addis Ababa Culture, Arts and Tourism Bureau together with Addis Ababa University launched a continuous annual language conference based on Mother-tongue Language Day on Tuesday.

Deputy Speaker of the Addis Ababa City Council, Her Excellency Faiza Mohammed, stated that since Addis Ababa is a multilingual city, it is necessary to pay attention to the implementation of multilingual education and carry out extensive activities in passing it on to the next generation, in her opening remark.

In the conference, veteran language professors presented research articles on the subject and there was a broad discussion. It is planned to work together with Addis Ababa University so that the conference will continue to be a recognized annual language conference in the city.



First language conference participants



Her Excellency Faiza Mohammed