



# The Ethiopian Herald

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## Award bedrock to create institutional dev't: *Awardees*

BY ASHENAFI ANIMUT

**ADDIS ABABA** –The Ethiopian Institutions Success Award creates an opportunity to expedite national institutional aspirations and achievements, institution's distinguished awardees commented.

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) has recently honored the Ethiopian Institutional Success Award to the Ministry of Agriculture, Ethiopian Airlines, Ethio Post, Ethio Telecom, and the Abbay Dam project for their significant achievements and global influence.

One of the awardees, Abbay Dam Chief Project Manager Kifle Horo (Eng.) said that

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## Ministry eyeing private sector's robust partake in logistics

•Three private operators obtain licenses in multimodal transport

BY MESERET BEHAILU

**ADDIS ABABA** – The Ministry of Transport and Logistics (MoTL) said the government is desirous of joining efforts with the private sectors to realize modern and internationally-competent logistic service in Ethiopia.

The Ethiopian Maritime Authority (EMA) awarded licenses to three privately-owned operators namely Tikur Abay Transport, Panafric Global PLC and Cosmos

*See Ministry eyeing.. Page 3*



## Ethiopia to minimize medicines wastage to zero-percent

BY ESSEYE MENGISTE

**ADDIS ABABA** –Ethiopia is striving to minimize wastage of medicines to zero percent, said the Ministry of Health (MoH).

MoH State Minister Ayele Teshome (MD) told the Ethiopia Press Agency (EPA) that efforts are being exerted to avoid wastage of medicines in the country.

According to him, the national activities that have been done over the past five years have helped the country to bring wastage of drugs down to less than one percent.

However, the government is still working to minimize the wastage below zero through overcoming causing factors such as lack of enough information about number of users

*See. Ethiopia to minimize.. Page 3*

## Ethiopian boosts connectivity b/n Pakistan, Africa

•Pakistan desires of strengthening bilateral ties with Ethiopia

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

**ADDIS ABABA**– The Ethiopian Airlines has been creating new chapter of connectivity between Pakistan and Africa, said Pakistan Ambassador Mian Atif Sharif.

This came yesterday after Pakistan delegation discussed with the House of Peoples Representative (HoPR) Foreign Relations and Peace Affairs Standing Committee on ways to enhance bilateral cooperation.

Speaking at the occasion, Pakistan Ambassador to Ethiopia Mian Atif Sharif indicated that Ethiopian Airlines has directly flight from Addis Ababa to Karachi four times a week.

It is planning to increase the flights adding new destinations thereby creating new chapter of connectivity between Pakistan and Africa, he restated.

“We have direct connection from Pakistan to Ethiopia and from Ethiopia to the whole African countries.” It allows many Pakistanis businessperson to travel easily in Africa and others. Similarly, Ethiopia



opened its embassy in Islamabad last year, has been playing active role in bringing both people together,” he said.

As to the Ambassador, Pakistan is desirous of strengthening the existing close and friendly bilateral relations with Ethiopia.

There are a lot of rooms for the enhancement of the existing trade, investment, education, tourism and other cooperation.

Tourism is a good area because Ethiopia as well as African continent has several tourism values and attractions.

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Attaining economic structural change through interlinking various sectors, import substitution

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After wedding season, time for sober reflection and spiritual quest

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Unveiling blind spots, critical insights to fight poverty

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# ASU partners with local actors to digital education

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

**ADDIS ABABA-** Arizona State University (ASU) expressed readiness to partner with the Ministry of Education and other stakeholders to create a digital teaching environment in Ethiopian public universities.

Five public universities inaugurated their digital multimedia studios in an event held at the Addis Ababa University last week.

Approached by *The Ethiopian Herald* at the event, ASU Executive Director for Africa Initiatives Yeukai Mlambo (PhD) stated that the university has been working in tandem with local partners to advance digital teaching platforms and to advance access to education in Ethiopia. Moreover, the cooperation aims to enhance the university students' competence.

The director also mentioned the ASU's desire and readiness to supplement efforts that have been underway to transform Ethiopia's higher education into digital future, ensure global access and achieve education for all goal.

"We strive to levy expertise and address pressing challenges and creating much impact on communities around the



Yeukai Mlambo

world. As more young people in Africa and Ethiopia continue to demand higher education access, it is our role and responsibility to facilitate that access and open more doors."

According to her, the inaugurated digital studios mark a significant move forward in Ethiopia's journey to a digital future and the shift signifies personalized experience and facilitates broader access to education beyond traditional boundaries.

Technology and online learning provide viable solutions to scale up education access, allow more youth to enroll in universities and in multiple modalities

that would feed realities in both current and future aspirations and resources.

Also, the studios symbolize innovation and progress and laying the ground for future investment and creating quality and digital teaching. By the same token, the studios are essential to foster learning experience that is important for the generations to come.

The director further highlighted that the digitization process would ensure quality and equitable education that would continuously produce a competent and competitive workforce for Ethiopia's economy.

"Our collaboration with the Ministry of Education is amplifying the higher learning institutions' transformation and their sustainability in Ethiopia and through technology; we are expanding the access to education and ensure inclusive excellence and global impact for all."

Mlambo added, "We recognize African youth's potential in unlocking the continent's potential and our engagement here aims to expand inclusive education opportunity at all levels. Education serves as keystone to development and contributes a meaningful role to Africa's goals and helps its people to see a brighter future."



## Green Legacy becomes source of thriving jobs, businesses

BY YESUF ENDRIS

**ADDIS ABABA-** Owing to the government's relentless support to greenery businesses, the Green Legacy Initiative has created sizable jobs and nurture entrepreneurs, the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) announced.

Authority Green Legacy and Plantation Forest CEO Aberu Tena told the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that a growing number of youth are securing permanent jobs and changing their livelihoods by supplying seedlings to the public and private companies.

Thousands of youths have also obtained seasonal jobs during the rainy season and they are being employed to distribute, plant and to conserve seedling.

"Almost same number of seedlings will be planted this year and it is expected that more youth will be benefited from the initiative. Agro-forestry, which is integrated in the initiative, has also attracted youth and farmers for further investment."

In related news, the authority is preparing a proclamation to make environmental criminals accountable by law.

Accordingly, the EPA's Lawyer Mesfin Tadesse stated that the current law has the limitation to bring environment pollutants to justice and efforts to bring environmental violations to courts have not brought the desirable outcomes. The proclamation is being prepared considering the growing environment pollution including sound pollution.

Also, the existing law that aims to govern environmental issues has not succeeded in curtailing chemical disposal, sound pollution and deforestation. "Following the adoption of the proclamation, we hope there will be a specialized bench to environmental affairs."

About the rationale to specialized bench, the lawyer highlighted that judges in the ordinary courts are insufficient in number and may not have the desirable knowledge about environment crimes. "In this regard, the establishment of specialized bench and deploying judges for environmental affairs has become the order of the day."

# Ministry provides over twelve thousand hect land to industries

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

**ADDIS ABABA-** Ministry of Industry disclosed that it is transferring some 12,055 hectare land that already has site plan for industries over the past seven months.

Let Ethiopia Produce Movement Project Office Coordinator Ayana Zewide (PhD) told the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that the office is undertaking several activities with regard to land preparation and cluster development.

To this end, some 57,589 hectare with site plan has been prepared, of which 12,055 hectare is being transferred to industries during the past seven months.

Moreover, around 763 sheds have also been transferred to manufacturing industries in four states and two city administrations, as to him.

Similarly, follow up and support has been provided for states and city administrations to make both the federal and states 'let Ethiopia produce movement' cluster based plans and report systems go in align. Thus, around six states have so far prepared cascaded plan.

Besides having separate budget for the movement, state leaders including experts at all levels have shown strong commitment



to undertake essential evaluation of report, he added.

On the other hand, the Coordinator, the office has identified the major challenges

that have been witnessed in relation to input, infrastructure, skilled manpower, working and expansion areas, and custom and logistic services. Thus, it has been carrying out follow up and supports to address the challenges.

## EPHA contributing to improve basic health services

### •To hold 35<sup>th</sup> annual conference soon

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

**ADDIS ABABA** - Ethiopian Public Health Association (EPHA) said its annual conferences are contributing to improve basic health services as it prepared to hold the 35th edition.

The association has finalized preparations to hold the 35th annual health conference and meeting from March 17 to 19 in Addis Ababa in the presence of 800 to 1000 professionals.

Briefing the media, the EPHA Director General, Alemayehu Mekonnen (MD) said that the EPHA annual conferences have been contributing to improve the quality of health services and health sector development in Ethiopia.

Since the primary healthcare accessibility is a key to achieve universal health coverage, an important policy improvement inputs would be collected



from the annual conference, he indicated.

This would help to focus on universal health coverage to ensure basic health services accessibility and coverage, he said.

As to him, the three-day annual conference includes panel discussions, scientific conference, research finding

presentations, oral and poster presentation, exhibition and call for action.

The scientific conference would help to forward inputs for policy improvement and others, he added.

According to the Director, the transmissions of various diseases including Zoonosis (diseases spread from non-human animals to humans) have been increasing from time to time.

For him, it requires creating awareness, empowering experts, strengthening one health and others to control these diseases.

The outstanding health professionals who contributed well in research and health service sector would be awarded, he noted.

This year's conference would take place with a theme of 'Universal Health Coverage' prioritizing in improving the accessibility of basic health services and coverage in the country, it was learnt.

## Ethiopian boosts..

He, moreover, said: "Since Ethiopia is headquarters of various continental and international organizations, it offers several potentials to bilateral trade, investment, education cooperation, tourism and others. We need to improve close cooperation on the multilateral affairs. We have strong trade relations and potentials to increase trade relations."

As to him, both countries are looking to have more business and parliamentary exchanges. "We will create more cooperation in different areas. Still both countries' bilateral ties are at new height. There is a strong cooperation specifically in defense and tourism."

For his part, the HoPR Foreign Relations and Peace Affairs Standing Committee Chairperson Dima Negwo (PhD) said that both sides have a lot of areas to strengthen bilateral cooperation such as trade, investment, education, tourism and others.

The delegation and standing committee discussed on enhancing parliamentary relations, trade and other cooperation and others, he said.

## Award bedrock...

the reformist government under Abiy's leadership has been undertaking various activities that enabled the Abbay dam project witness a remarkable progress.

"This and other recognition and award ceremonies have a great role to promote the achievements of institutions and ensure the country's transformation journey," the Project Manager added.

The Chief further remarked that the award belongs not only to an individual but also for all Ethiopians standing on the side of the project.

Another award winner, the Ethiopian Airlines Group Chief Executive Officer Mesfin Tasew on his part remarked that the recognition would be a driving force that pushes the employees and crews who are serving passengers with great enthusiasm without time bound globally.

Quoting the Premier's speech, the CEO emphasized that this award would also inspire them to be competent and industrious in the global arena. Besides, it would be a means to execute institutional goals that help yield more achievements and this needs to be

further strengthened.

Similarly, Ethio telecom CEO Firehiwot Tamru said that following the reform activities, the company has long been endeavoring to improve its service provision to its esteemed customers through deploying various cutting-edge technologies, thus triumphing remarkable success.

"The award not only recognizes our achievements, but also it creates motivation to be ready for other duties of the future," Firehiwot noted.

As part of key component of nation building, she said that her company is also making strides to be on the forefront in various fields not only in the country but also at the continental level.

She said: "Apart from amassing the customers' number, telecom industry is contributing its share in the country's digital economy development."

They said that this recognition motivates not only their respective institutions to work harder, but also sets an example for other institutions.

## Ethiopia to minimize...

and the limitation to deliver necessary drugs in the areas where they are needed the most, the State Minister said.

Efforts are being done to solve problems in the health sector through modernizing data management and providing quality services, he expressed.

As to him, the production and supply of pharmaceuticals grows parallel to the development of the country.

MoH encourages the private sector to play due role to improve public health by contributing fair share to resolve shortage of medical resources, he indicated.

"Importing medical resources will not completely solve the country's problem, even if it is solvable, it is difficult to sustain, because there is a

problem of maintenance and expert supply in the country. To address the challenge, it is necessary to create and produce medical resources in the country," Ayele said.

There is no adequate preparation to bring resources in the country and lack of foreign currency has made it difficult to solve the problem in a sustainable way, he mentioned.

For him, producing medicines at home is not enough as the supply chain should be reach to the consumer level and the Ministry is striving to this end.

Ayele's organization is working on modernizing the health system, designing strategy, policy and encouraging the private sector to address the problem.

## Ministry eyeing...

Multimodal S.C. to transport imported items in the multimodal system.

Speaking at the occasion, MoTL Minister Alemu Semie (PhD) said the government has valued the role and contribution of the private sector in the multimodal transport sector to bring economic dynamism.

Logistic is one of the core areas that the given country to be economically competent at the global. If Ethiopia ensures effective logistic service, it will attract international trade, foreign direct investment (FDI), and the likes, Alemu elaborated.

"Ethiopia is listed under low performance in the logistic service based on Logistic Performance Index. To improve this, the reform government has been carrying out various activities during the past over five years."



Photo: Hadush Abraha

The minister further stated that Ethiopia needs many operators to modernize the logistics multimodal transport service and to bring development, prosperity, and international competitiveness.

In this regard, the MoTL is committed to extend the necessary support to private operators to become the leading actors in Africa's logistics industry in years to come.

The EMA Director General Abdulber

Shemsu (Eng) for his part indicated the country could save an average 20 million USD annually from effective utilization of multimodal transport service that combined the road, maritime and air transport together.

According to him, the opening up of the multimodal transport service for private actors is among one of the government's crucial reforms that aim to transform the logistics industry.

The multimodal transport system will expedite regional and international trade linkages and facilitate the national development through joint effort. The main reason for the implementation of a multimodal system is to facilitate efficient distribution of goods and services such as delivering the product and service with cost effective approach, Abdulber remarked.

# Opinion

## Ethiopia's seaport aspiration emerges from purposeful negotiations and shared interests

BY ADDISALEM MULAT

There is no gainsaying the fact that the recent signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Ethiopia and Somaliland was the result of prolonged discussions and deliberations that came to pass over a considerable length of time. This pact did not put into effect out of no were or devoid of in-depth consideration, but it is the result of a pre-planned approach with the intention of surmounting common interests and matters between the two parties.

Ethiopia's aspirational goal of having a seaport is further encouraged by its large amount of population, which at present surpasses 120 million people. Needless to say, the increasing population functions as a noteworthy moving power behind the country's ambition to set up seaport on the grounds that it requires well-organized networks for worldwide market. With sizeable population, there is an enhanced mutual dependence on import-export undertakings to comply with the demands of society and put up with its means of support.

International relations expert Abdulrahman Ahmed (PhD) recently told the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that seaport is crucial from both economic and security standpoint and Ethiopia's aspiration to access the Red Sea or Indian Ocean by all peaceful means is justifiable.

From an economic standpoint, Ethiopia can benefit from export trade because of the strategic location close to Bab-el-Mandeb, the Red Sea, and the Indian Ocean. Having enjoyed an important geographical location, the country's direct access to sea outlets is also crucial to maintain its peace and stability and preserve national interests.

"Ethiopia had broad influence in the historically important region and its ability to acquire a seaport would enable its voice to be heard at the regional and international levels and would also have a positive impact on the country's relation with the rest of the world."

Ethiopia's large population which currently stands at approximately 120 million is also another factor to its port aspiration. The increasing population requires Ethiopia to have a sea port, and this sea port will foster the country's international trade. As society's life is highly dependent on import-export activity, there will be an urgent need for a seaport.

In actual fact, the burgeoning population of Ethiopia gives emphasis to the pressing need for a seaport to oil the wheels of the country's international trade. It is common knowledge that a seaport would act a part as a momentous entryway, allowing the integrated flow through importation and exportation, in so doing corroborating Ethiopia's economic growth and making certain the obtain ability of vital produces.

In a similar way, the establishment of a seaport would not only mollycoddle to the country's immediate concerns but also set the foundation for sustainable economic



growth as well as affluence.

By embracing international trade through a seaport, Ethiopia can give full play to new business opportunities, magnetize capital flow from other nations, and spread its economy. This would not only augment Ethiopia's economic advancement but also play a part in generating employment and the overall development of perception of the position of life.

As the country's growing community is a vital factor driving its ambition for a seaport. It should be pointed out that the MoU signed between Ethiopia and Somaliland does not imply any elements that could blow things out of all proportion. The pacts focus on specific areas of collaboration that are mutually advantageous for both parties.

But some groups that hate to death the growth of Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa (HoA) make an effort to pour cold water on the efforts of the two parties. But no matter what the challenges may be Ethiopia and Somaliland have sustained going in the right direction giving the cold shoulder to cook up stories.

Ethiopia's direct access to port will guarantee an enduring peace in the HoA and denying the aspiration of the hundred and twenty million people would bring imminent threat for the already volatile region, Ambassador Sileshi Bekele (Eng. PhD) recently told the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA).

According to Ambassador Seleshi, those interest groups that are opposing Ethiopia's aspiration to sea access are opposing its engagement in the regional affairs. Those groups oppose Ethiopia's port deal knowing the fact that the accord will not bring any harm to their interest and they simply prefer to keep the country away from development and integration in the strategic region.

"Ethiopia is the most populous landlocked country in the globe and the diplomatic cost to reverse such a lack of port access could not be easy. Though, we need to keep moving forward until we ensure at least a single reliable and enduring solution."

Ethiopia needs a sovereign access to port to protect its national interest and not to harm any party. The global economy and diplomatic relations are challenging for a country devoid of guaranteed sea outlets. All

this aspiration needs to be attained through a meticulous and intensive diplomatic engagement.

The insatiable craving for well-organized worldwide trade turns out to be progressively more crucial as the populace enlarges, resulting in an escalated independence on import-export undertakings. By the same token, the actuality of well-designed ports in Ethiopia would meaningfully strengthen collaboration and encourage economic integration among nations in the Horn of African region. With enhanced connectivity and commercial changes, there would be improved chances for economic regional integration and exchange of goods, services, and ideas.

Speaking to local media, a Political-Economic Analyst for Africa Lawrence Freeman in recent times affirmed that leaders of Ethiopia's coastal neighbors should negotiate on the latter's aspiration to a long-term lease agreement and in infrastructural investment in sea ports.

The analyst believed that, the HoA would be a model for economic integration and cooperation in the continent once the countries peacefully settle Ethiopia's quest to access the sea. "In this regard, leaders, engineers, planners and economists of the East African countries should discuss the matter and bargaining options."

According to him, the East African leaders should also identify efficient means to utilize and maximize the Red Sea benefits for improved trade and economic cooperation given the kilometers of travel, the port capacity, and production capabilities.

"Ethiopia is a growing economy and if we can merge its potentials with neighboring states, East Africa will be a model for economic development on the continent. Also, Ethiopia, Eritrea and other countries in the Horn can serve as a development model if they look for development, peace and cooperation."

The analyst expressed his belief that, Ethiopia could transfer shares in strategic companies including ethio telecom and Ethiopian Airlines to coastal neighbors to materialize its quest for seaports in Eritrea, Somalia or Kenya. Furthermore, Ethiopia's growing light manufacturing and enormous

agricultural potential coupled with Abay Dam's 5,150 MW of electricity make the country ideal for satisfying neighboring state's energy demand.

Ethiopia might not have a coastline or kilometers away from the Red Sea, but it has the largest growing economy in the region and permitting the country's quest for sea access sustains its rapid economic progress. This would also help to change the livelihoods of East African people and enhance intra-regional trade.

If Ethiopia improves its manufacturing and agricultural capabilities, then having a corridor that gives access to Red Sea ports is imperative. This is a positive, win-win option for the entire East Africa. We should find a solution and this peaceful solution for economic growth of the region could be found in everybody's self-interest.

In an exclusive interview with the Ethiopian News Agency, Ethiopia's Ambassador to Canada, Fitsum Arega said that Ethiopia has been massively investing in various infrastructures which benefit its neighbors and the entire region as well. He added that massive investment is now paying off to the efforts of achieving the goals of Agenda 2063, particularly economic integration.

The ambassador also noted "the MoU between Ethiopia and Somaliland is a continuation of efforts that we had started decades back to integrate with the region and mutually benefit. So, the MoU is historic and Ethiopia's economy is growing and we would like to have more access to sea ports."

The MoU poses no threat to any country, he said, and stressed "when the dust settles, all the concerned countries will understand Ethiopia's aspiration to grow along with the region; Ethiopia's cooperation through integration."

The African Continental Free Trade Area Agreement (AfCFTA) is one of the instruments that Ethiopia has massive potential to utilize from and ensure mutual economic development and growth with all African countries, he elaborated.

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

# Editorial

## Sustainable institutions realize the 'Africa we want'

On Tuesday, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (Ph.D) has bestowed the Ethiopian Institutional Success Award on government institutions/projects for their remarkable achievement and global impact in their respective endeavors. The Ethiopian Airlines, Ethio Telecom, Ethio Post, Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) project and the Ministry of Agriculture's wheat program have received the awards.

Strong and sustainable institutions set the way, particularly for African countries, to attain their economic sovereignty.

After securing their political independence from colonial rulers, many countries in Africa as well as some outside Africa have found it challenging to ensure their economic freedom as they were not lucky enough to have strong economic institutions of their own. As a result, they are forced to depend on institutions that are affiliated to the governments or companies of their former colonial rulers. This exposes to the resumption of the exploitation of their economy indirectly, what is known as today neo colonialism.

Having such domestic mega institutions is an outcome of years of perseverance. It should also be maintained and transferred to the next generation.

To mention, the Ethiopian Air Lines has raised itself into an international organization that works not only as a means of income generation but also integrating Africa with the rest of the world. Furthermore, it has become an institution that helps African countries become self-reliant in Air Transport by partnering with their national airlines.

The GERD is also a project that is owned, built and funded by the people and government of Ethiopia. The government has exerted the best it could to remove the barriers that inhibited the building of the project. The people also struggled to see the completion of the dam by purchasing bonds and making other contributions. Now, the project which is nearing its completion has also played meaningful role in bringing the people together, revolutionized the old thoughts of perceiving mega projects as difficult or impossible and has given the light of hope for better economic return from the power it generates.

A new venture that is leading the country via the route of self-reliance is the production of wheat through various technologies of boosting productivity. Throughout the world, wheat is one of the most widely consumed crops. Hence, the productivity of wheat gives a nation the capacity to feed a significant portion of its population and eventually helps ensure food sovereignty. Indeed, a country can hardly claim to be fully sovereign without ensuring its food sovereignty. Hence, Ministry of Agriculture deserves the recognition as it has fought hard to make sure that the country can produce wheat through the ordinary farming practice as well as introducing the summer wheat/lowland irrigation wheat farming activities.

Ethiotelecom and EthioPost are the two longstanding state owned enterprises that have been undertaking their responsibilities throughout the century during which the country passed through various ups and downs. They have proven resilience and adapted themselves to the ever-emerging technological advancement.

The common and unique achievement of the awarded institutions is that they have become strong pillars for the country's ambition of forming strong regional integration with the neighboring countries as well as the entire continent. Ethiopia is already working well in integrating Africa through air transport and electric power supply. Its integration with Kenya is being reciprocated by Kenya's investment in Ethiopia's telecom sector via Safaricom for instance.

This is likely to raise the interest and commitment of other countries to interconnect their economy and infrastructure with Ethiopia raising the shared economic and political benefits. Therefore, the government should continue to give due incentives and recognition for such institutions that prop up the economic and diplomatic stature of the nation.

# Opinion

## Ethiopia must harness its cultural diversity to promote tourism, diplomacy

BY SOLOMON DIBABA

Cultural diplomacy encompasses the use of cultural elements, such as arts, language, education, and heritage, as instruments to foster understanding, promote cooperation, and build positive relationships between nations and peoples. It is a form of soft power that focuses on the exchange of ideas, values, traditions, and expressions to create a favorable image and influence perceptions at the international level. Cultural diplomacy aims to bridge cultural gaps, overcome stereotypes, and cultivate mutual respect. Here are some key aspects of cultural diplomacy:

Governments and organizations promote cultural exchange programs that involve the exchange of artists, scholars, students, and professionals. These programs facilitate direct interactions, enabling individuals from different cultures to learn from one another.

Moreover, promoting the learning of a country's language is a common cultural diplomacy strategy. Language is a powerful tool for communication and understanding, and proficiency can enhance cross-cultural dialogue.

Hosting or participating in international arts and cultural events, such as festivals, exhibitions, and performances, provides a platform for showcasing a country's artistic and cultural achievements. It helps in creating a positive image and fostering cultural understanding.

Establishing cultural institutes, such as language schools, libraries, and cultural centers, can serve as hubs for cultural exchange. These institutions provide resources for learning about a country's culture, history, and language.

Efforts to preserve and promote cultural heritage, including historic sites, monuments, and traditional practices, contribute to cultural diplomacy. Shared heritage can serve as a unifying force between nations.

Cultural diplomacy is often a component of public diplomacy efforts, where governments engage with foreign publics to build goodwill, enhance understanding, and shape perceptions through cultural initiatives.

Tourism serves as a vehicle for cultural exchange by exposing visitors to the traditions, customs, and lifestyles of different cultures. Positive tourism experiences contribute to a favorable international image.

Cultural diplomacy can play a role in conflict resolution by promoting dialogue and understanding between nations with historical or political differences. Shared cultural experiences can build bridges and promote reconciliation.

Cultural diplomacy recognizes the power of culture to transcend national boundaries and connect people on a deeper level. It is an effective means of building relationships, promoting cooperation, and fostering a sense of global interconnectedness.

The development of cultural diplomacy in Ethiopia in her relations with foreign countries is an activity that is as old as the formation of modern state in the country

Although not properly managed and utilized over time, for over half a century cultural diplomacy was practiced in Ethiopia through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and specialized commissions like Ethiopia Tourism Commission and the Ministry of Culture. As well as private and public tourism operators like the NTO.

Ethiopian embassies and consulates overseas conducted cultural diplomacy through cultural attaches that were assigned to the nations missions abroad. During the Derge administration, a national cultural group composed of persons of arts and musician skilled in traditional dances toured many

countries across the world, Europe and the USA to introduce the multi-ethnic cultural dances of the country to the rest of the world.

Ethiopian persons of creative arts and painters need to be encouraged to widely engage in art exhibitions in foreign lands and in Ethiopia. This is very important because Ethiopian painters have been engaged in painting right from ancient times to the present time. It must be acknowledged that the Ethiopian Orthodox Church has remained to be a custodian of religious paintings and art works that are yet to be introduced to the rest of the world.

Ethiopia continues to enjoy stronger cultural diplomatic relations with the Korean Republic, Japan and India. India in particular played a major role in shaping up modern education in Ethiopia over the past several decades.

The community schools established in Ethiopia can foster deeper cultural relations as support institutions for promoting cultural diplomacy between Ethiopia and the rest of the world.

Given the potentials that Ethiopia possesses in tourism Ethiopia and the development of eco-tourism projects in the country, the nation can benefit more by combining cultural diplomacy with tourism and modern marketing and communication activities in the various sub-sections of cultural diplomacy. The practical reciprocity between cultural diplomacy and Tourism Ethiopia provides the nation with comparative advantages of promoting public diplomacy to enhance Ethiopia's policy of peaceful coexistence and mutually beneficial socio-economic development.

For instance, sport federations like Ethiopian Athletics Federation, Ethiopian Football Federation can take active part in promoting both cultural and tourism development by devising applicable and strong brand forms of marketing on Tourism Ethiopia. Ethiopian promoters need to work on programs like visit Ethiopia in cooperation with a number of Premier League football teams in the UK and similar federations in Spain, Brazil, Germany and Italy.

Although not properly exploited, local trade fairs and international exhibitions that were conducted in Ethiopia and abroad have provided a modest opportunity to promote FDI inflow which needs to be further expanded by using Ethiopia's membership in BRICS and other international alternative economic unions.

Nonetheless, it is also very important to mainstream tourism development in the major economic sectors in focusing on foreign export trade and development.

Language development to foster cultural diplomacy is another area in which Ethiopia is being introduced to the rest of the world. For instance, the Geez language is being taught in several higher institutes of learning and universities in Germany while Oromo ethnographic and cultural studies are popularly studies in the same country. In the Russian Federation, Amharic is being taught in schools across the country. All the above mentioned theoretical and practical analysis indicates the extent to which Ethiopia can employ cultural diplomacy for peace and reconciliation and stability in the Horn of Africa and the entire continent.

Although Ethiopia is on the right track in recognizing and using cultural diplomacy, there is still more to be desired in combining Tourism Ethiopia with the basic elements of cultural diplomacy being implemented by the country. Special strategies and action plans need to be devised and implemented to widen and deepen the nations over all diplomatic efforts in the African region and across the world. Concerted institutional approach will help to bring about the desired results in the nation's foreign policy and diplomatic objectives.

**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

## Attaining economic structural change through interlinking various sectors, import substitution

BY ABEBE WOLDEGIORGIS

In the last two decades and half, the incumbents have taken various measures to stabilize the nation's macro-economic imbalances. Opening the economic sphere to the private sector, introducing laws helpful to attract foreign investment, boost export, enhance the nation's foreign currency garnering capacity, accumulating capital, tackling inflation and others can be mentioned in this regard.

Demis Chanyalew (PhD) is a long serving economist working as a consultant for various firms. While making an interview with local media recently, he said that Ethiopia is an agrarian country in which agriculture is the means of living for 85 % of its population, contributes 78 % of foreign currency earnings, supply inputs to the agro-industries and food to the market.

Yet, the sector is vulnerable to extreme climate conditions and unless the nation brings structural change through shifting agricultural labor to the manufacturing and service sectors, attaining sustainable development is unrealistic.

As to him, cognizant of these, the government has tried its level best to bring structural change since long ago and in this regard, it is dedicated by allocating its time and budget for the expansion of manufacturing. To this end, it constructed industrial parks in various parts of the country, supplied electric power and internet services, clean water and rented shades in lower price and provided banking services which have made ease doing business.

Attracted by the created enabling environment, foreign investors from Turkey, India, China and other countries came here and engaged in textile and garment, pharmaceuticals, beverage and food, floriculture, vegetables and fruits and created job opportunities to hundreds of thousands. Most of the industrial parks and the flower farms are located adjacent to the Ethio-Djibouti rail way which reduced transaction cost of exporting products and importing industrial inputs from abroad.

As to Demis, the flourishing of manufacturing brought multifaceted benefit to the country. It attracted both foreign and local investment and broaden the role of the private sector in the economy; created job opportunity to the unemployed; linked with the agriculture sector by utilizing raw materials from the sector; encouraged innovation and entrepreneurs; boost export and substituted imports.

The economic development of the Asian Tiger countries such as South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore and Hong Kong bears witness how the manufacturing industry played pivotal role in attaining structural change and economic development.

Forty years ago, these countries' economy was predominantly agrarian but after reforming the economy and attaining structural change, they have changed from

**Import substitution helped countries to use more local resources as input in the industrial production and create market opportunities to farmers and raise their income which in turn utilizes more agricultural inputs that enhances productivity**

net importers of goods in to net exporters. As a result, they could increase their hard currency reserves and earning capacity and become the manufacturing hub of the world.

Earlier to coming across the structural change, they used to export agricultural products to the foreign market in its raw form without value addition. The unprocessed agricultural products exported to abroad were less competent in the market which put the exporting countries in a disadvantageous position.

After achieving structural change, their manufacturing products were produced with less production cost and exported with value addition which enhanced their market competition so that they could gain more profit. Because of the expanding of

manufacturing industry, they become potent to shift stranded agricultural labor to the manufacturing sector. Unlike being engaged in the subsistence farming seasonally, the labor force engaged in manufacturing that give them opportunity to produce on daily bases which increases working time and productivity.

Import substitution helped countries to use more local resources as input in the industrial production and create market opportunities to farmers and raise their income which in turn utilizes more agricultural inputs that enhances productivity. Currently, the four Asian Tiger countries are among high ranking economies. They have been fueled by exports, rapid industrialization and have achieved high level economic growth since 1960s and joined the ranks of the world wealthiest nations. They have shared common characteristics including sharp focus on exports and educated people and increased saving rates.

Recently, the Ministry of Industry announced that Ethiopia's import substitution strategy has started bearing fruit by substituting import goods worth 2.26 billion USD over the last fiscal year alone. Although Ethiopia is endowed with immense resources vital for the development of manufacturing industries, the country's production capacity is only 38 % of the products. The remaining 62 % is imported with huge amount of foreign currency.

State Minister of Industry, Tarekegn Bululta told local media that the country has not yet ensured its production sovereignty despite the abundant natural resources and productive labor force vital for the development of the industries. Ethiopia imports fertilizer, engineering technology, machineries, and chemicals, among others. Therefore, Ethiopia is "a consumer nation," according to the State Minister.

Nevertheless, Tarekegn said the Government of Ethiopia has been working to reverse this reality with a view to expediting the development of the country by strengthening the manufacturing industrial sector.

In this regard, he stated that enhancing import substitution has been given the utmost priority. Ethiopia's import substitution strategy has been bearing fruit and the nation was able to substitute products such as textiles and foodstuffs. Some 96 product items are identified, among which some have already been successfully accomplished. For instance, military uniforms that are used to be imported are now fully substituted with domestic products.

In addition, 100% of beer barley seed demand of the country has also been covered with domestic products. According to him, the nation has even begun exporting beer barely seeds as the country was able to produce surplus. Encouraged by the achievements and supported by the strategy, Ethiopia was able to substitute products worth 2.26 billion USD over the last fiscal year. In addition, the country has been engaged in domestic production of various foodstuffs for the treatment of Moderate

Acute Malnutrition and the results are encouraging.

The production of such items including beverages has enabled the nation to save 1.36 billion USD. Recently, the World Food Program purchased food products from Ethiopia, supporting the country to alleviate foreign currency shortages.

Tarekegn further said that Ethiopia has also been encouraged to produce student uniforms and bags as the domestic demand for the products is very huge with a total population of around 30 million students. The import substitution strategy of Ethiopia also promotes strong consumers that prefer domestic products, the State Minister stressed, noting that import substitution is key to alleviate the shortage of foreign currency.

Besides, the strategy encourages local industries to enhance their productive capacity. Ethiopia is endowed with abundant resources and it is the second populous country in Africa next to Nigeria. This indicates that the nation has huge labor force which can produce more and can be consumer as well. But both the natural and human resources are not sufficiently utilized and through tapping the resources and expanding the manufacturing industry thereby increasing production along with productivity so that export can be boosted.

Though the country is agrarian, amazingly it imports foods, edible oil and others that can be produced locally and for the importation of such products the nation allocates its meager hard currency that would have been reallocated to the other sectors.

Ethiopia produces oil seeds and exports in its raw form. Paradoxically, it imports edible oil from abroad and spends more than one billion Dollar annually. In such situation, attaining sustainable development is impossible. In fact, there are some local companies which are engaged in edible oil production in regions such as Amhara and Dire Dawa but still they import inputs vital for the manufacturing process.

According to studies, Ethiopia has huge resources of pulp growing in various parts of the country which can be used as inputs for paper production but it is not exploited yet. Some private companies appealed to engage in pulp and paper production to the pertinent institutions but due to bureaucratic hurdles, they are unable to start production. On the other hand, the nation spends millions of Dollar for the importation of paper.

Currently, due to the increasing of paper price in the world market, the allotment of hard currency for the importation is doubling. The printing cost of texts and newspapers is also increasing from time to time. Therefore, substituting paper products should be taken as a way out so that saving the hard currency can be realized.

In a nut shell, the volume of the products does not meet the local demand. Hence, scaling up the production and expanding manufacturing industries is essential, it was learned.

# Art & Culture

## After wedding season, time for sober reflection and spiritual quest

BY MULUGETA GUDETA

January is the beginning of the coldest season in the Western world while here in Africa or in Ethiopia, it is business as usual: sunshine, festivities and weddings are the order of the day. And now when March knocks at our doors, we close one chapter of the year and start another chapter. It is a time of transition from the quest for carnal pleasures to the quest for spirituality, so to say.

The last few months allowed tens of thousands of couples across the country to tie the knots and start new chapters in their individual lives. That was also a transition from a life of chastity or loneliness to that of forming a family and joining the community as full-grown adults with responsibilities and duties that can only be addressed in matrimonial relationships.

Addis Ababa as the capital of Ethiopia and the biggest city in the country has been the scene of tens of thousands of weddings and religious festivities and cultural or traditional rituals. Addis is not only a big city and the economic and political throbbing heart of the country. It is also the hub of cultures and the melting pot of diverse nationalities and their traditional practices. When you live in Addis, you also live in 'little Ethiopia' without travelling elsewhere in the country. Addis is also the macrocosm African cultures and traditions where African food cultures, from western, eastern, southern and north Africa and dressing codes, hairstyles, modern fashions and traditional costumes are found either merged with local manners or surviving side by side. Addis is not only the biggest airlines hub and connecting point, but also the capital that welcomes and sends of thousands of travelers every day and night.

Addis Ababa is slowly but certainly becoming the fashion capital of Africa, the centre of African culinary delights and hub of modernity and the continuity of tradition. Addis is the face of Africa and the reflection of its future in its present. Restaurants catering for an African clientele and foreign in general are popping up in the capital. It is indeed amazing to live in or visit Addis and at the same time to be served with Nigerian or Senegalese traditional foods and beverages. It is also astonishing to go to nightclubs in Addis and dance to the tunes of African music from Afro-beat to Afro-jazz and Afro-punk as well as Afro-pop. Addis has everything it takes to become an African metropolis. It has color, vibrancy, creativity and generosity in every way possible; from its climate to its foods, hospitality, love and the modesty of its local residents. It is also fast becoming the capital that is attracting its Diaspora citizens during the wedding seasons



when thousands of Ethiopians flock in for weddings or other traditional festivities in the last two or three months in particular.

It is generally assumed more economical and more colorful to launch wedding parties in Addis than elsewhere in the world for the simple reason that you can have more happy time in Addis than say in New York at relatively lower costs. You must be a tycoon to have extravagant wedding parties in New York while here in Addis you can have the same level of enjoyment at a lesser cost simply because of the power of the dollar over the local currency. That's why thousands of Diaspora Ethiopians are flocking home each year to buy residential apartments or stylish residential villas or acquire a piece of real estate to set up a firm or a big mall.

The other amazing aspect of Ethiopian cultural life in general is that you have a season for hard work, mainly from July to September, a season for rest, mainly from September to December and a season for fun that falls between January and March. Weddings are also held according to the seasons. You cannot have weddings in the middle of the Ethiopian rainy season because, in addition to bad weather, people are also busy tilling or preparing the land for the next harvesting season. Plus you don't have the necessary financial resources for throwing wedding parties because the next harvest is from October to December. Farmers have to sell their harvests in order to have enough money for their daughters' or sons' weddings.

In the Ethiopian calendar, there is also a time for turning our attention from earthly

life or from the temptations of the flesh to that of the heart, mind or spirit. Starting from March all through the two months of Lent (April and May), people focus on the hereafter and their spiritual quests find expression in fasting, praying, reading the scriptures and doing all the church rituals with more devotion than ever because there is no diversion, no festivity and no wedding party to steal their attention at this time of the year. This may also be the time for confessing our sins and communicating with the divine realm to make requests and offer gratitude to the Creator for making the year a bountiful one or for enjoying a healthy and wealthy life.

The two-month fasting season of Lent is most probably the healthier period of the year for those of us who have been indulging in and suffering from too much food and too much drinks. The wedding season is generally a time of overindulgence. And this is difficult for people who suffer from many ailments ranging from high blood pressure, diabetes and cardiovascular diseases. The popular thinking regarding indulgence is far from being based on scientific assumptions. Most people think and believe that a little fun once in a while is good for their health. Unfortunately, they often start with a little fun and end up with crazy eating and crazy drinking and self-control is thrown out of the window for the sake of mother pleasure.

That is why hospitals and clinics are busier during the season of indulgence and medical bills are bound to rise sharply while the cost of special drugs for all

types of chronic illnesses even become untouchable or beyond the financial means of most of our poorer folks. In this way, high pleasure is followed by high suffering and high medical costs although it may be worth it to indulge in the good things of life now and then. Those of us who sail safely through the turbulent two months of weddings and festivities must be the luckier ones who were either moderate in their consumption or naturally endowed with good health or follow healthy lifestyles. They are not only well-protected from illnesses but also from unnecessary or heavy spending in these difficult times.

On the other hand, the two months of fasting are considered good for saving money because people consume less food and drinks due to the religious prohibitions. A guy who gets intoxicated in the middle of the fasting season is not of course considered a good Christian. Yet, there are factors that frustrate the hope for saving on food expenditures such as the galloping inflation that is pushing prices of simple consumer items towards the brink of catastrophe.

Thus the opportunity for saving some money by cutting on our food consumptions during the fasting season is cancelled by the high cost of living and the net result is but more stress and more frustration. Unfortunately you cannot fight inflation by asking God in your prayers to lower the prices of consumer goods because He is not responsible for these things. He has given us everything we need for free but we are unable to fix our lives due to our human frailties or failures.

March does not only usher in a fasting season for Christians alone. This is also Ramadan time for tens of millions of Muslims in Ethiopia, who are firm believers in Allah and have faith in the holy month when evil is defeated and men and women find solace in giving away to the poor and in restraining their carnal appetite by sharing what they have with the wretched of the earth. This is also a great time for showing compassion and humility or humanity towards less fortunate folks and achieve spiritual peace through prayers.

Ramadan, like the Christian fasting season of Lent, does not come without costs. Food consumption attains a record time high because we have to make up for lost energies during the long fasting hours that take the entire daytime and come to an end almost at dawn next day. The fact that Lent and Ramadan start on the same day is no mere coincidence. It is a reflection of the peaceful coexistence of the two biggest religions in the country and the love and mutual respect adherents of both faiths show to one another. This is a phenomenon that is unique to Ethiopia and will remain so in the future too.

# Indepth

## Unveiling blind spots, critical insights to fight poverty

Poverty is multidimensional. If we think of classical thinkers, Adam Smith referred to the basis of self-respect and the importance of being able to “appear in public without shame,” while John Rawls wrote about “primary goods,” which included rights and liberties as well as income and wealth.

Amartya Sen, advancing in formalization, brought the notion of “functionings” as the “beings and doings” effectively available to people in their capability set, so they can “pursue the life plans they have reasons to value.”

It is mainstream today to argue that poverty is multidimensional, moving beyond just access to goods and services. But exploring which dimensions are “appropriate” in each context has been a fundamental pursuit of development analysts and practitioners in recent decades.

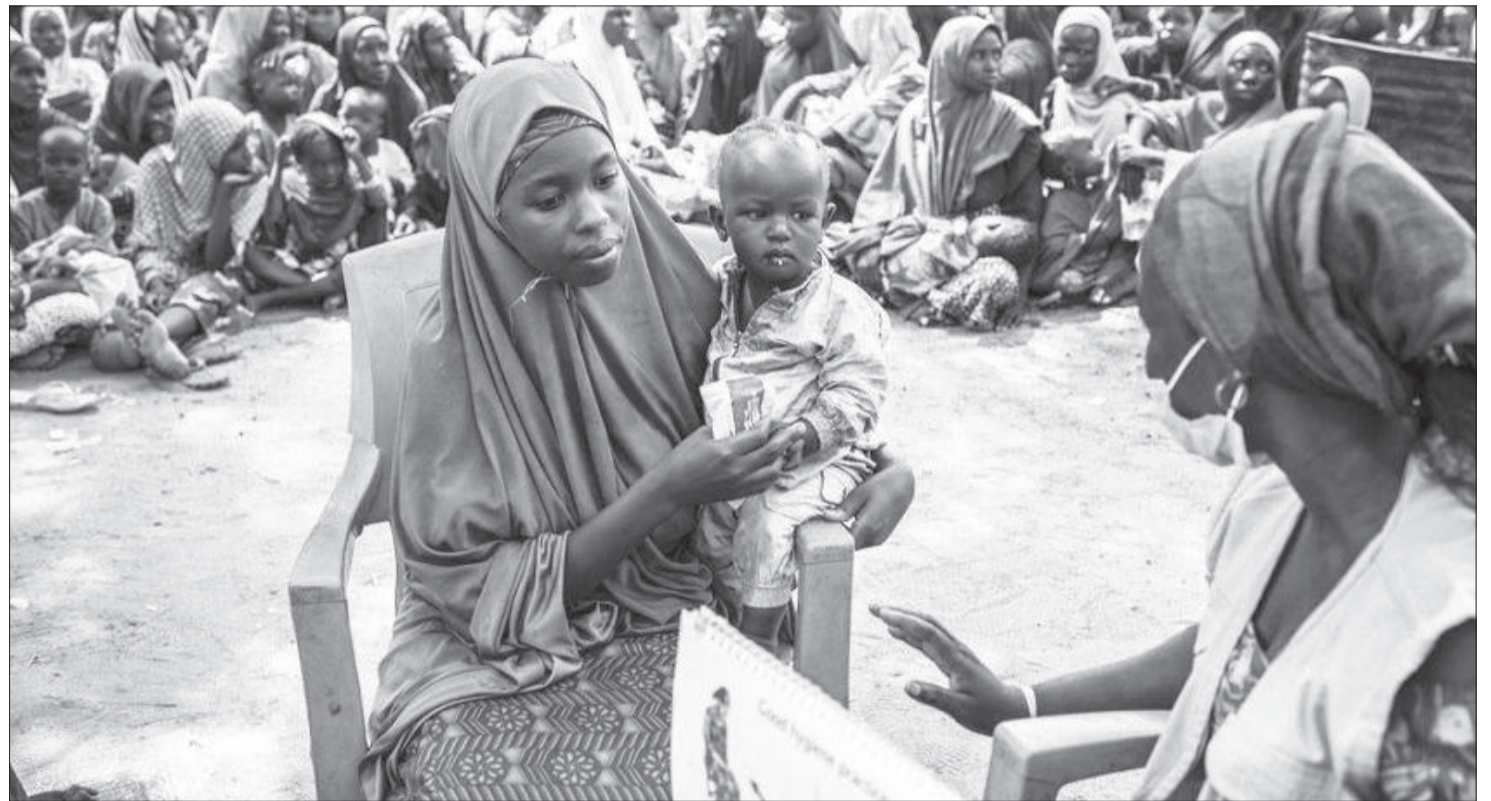
It has been almost 30 years since Sabina Alkire devoted her work to the understanding, classification, and measurement of the many dimensions of poverty, particularly those that are “hidden” in our concepts and indicators.

Indeed, there are some dimensions associated with experiencing the condition of poverty that cannot be so easily observed and have not been properly measured yet are very important when it comes to policy effectiveness.

Those dimensions include aspects related to emotions that trigger behavioural responses: feelings of isolation, discrimination, effects on the sense of dignity and self-respect, and disempowerment. We have come a long way in our thinking about poverty, but our actions to tackle it and to understand the complex interactions between dimensions remains underdeveloped.

At the World Bank, the project on “Voices of the Poor,” started almost 30 years ago, strove to think differently about poverty. It drew on the views of 60,000 people living in poverty across 60 countries to better understand the challenges they faced, helping expand our understanding of poverty to include not only income and consumption but also lack of access to education and health, powerlessness, voicelessness, vulnerability, and fear.

Later, in 2012, the Social Observatory project used a broader view of poverty dimensions to make anti-poverty projects more adaptive—and ultimately more effective. Since 2018, the World Bank’s multidimensional poverty measure has gone beyond monetary deprivation to include other dimensions such as access to education, health, nutritional, and basic infrastructure services.



And in 2023, the World Bank began publishing the multidimensional poverty index—an effort by the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative and the United Nations Development Programme—which is especially pertinent for low-income countries.

More recently, researchers from the University of Oxford and the global anti-poverty movement ATD Fourth World uncovered a set of “hidden dimensions of poverty” through a three-year participatory research project in six countries (Bangladesh, Bolivia, France, Tanzania, the United Kingdom, and the United States) that sought to further refine our understanding of poverty.

The teams identified nine dimensions of poverty that were common across all countries, despite the vastly different circumstances in each, using the “merging of knowledge” methodology. This approach brings together people in poverty (with their knowledge of the reality of poverty), academics (with their scientific knowledge), and practitioners (with their action-based knowledge).

The identified dimensions included a lack of decent work or income, of course, but also feelings of powerlessness, lacking control, and experiencing “povertyism” (negative attitudes and behaviours toward people living in poverty).

These lesser-recognized and lesser-visible dimensions of poverty are no less important for policies designed to combat poverty than a person’s income or access to employment. Escaping poverty will be far more difficult if you don’t also address the discrimination people in poverty face, the shame they experience, or the “aspirations gap” that results from being

raised in a low-income household.

But until now, policy makers have lacked the practical tools they need to properly capture and combat these hidden, and thus largely ignored, dimensions of poverty.

The Inclusive and Deliberative Elaboration and Evaluation of Policies (IDEEP) tool, which was presented at the ATD Fourth World, International Monetary Fund, and World Bank conference on Addressing the Hidden Dimensions of Poverty in Knowledge and Policies, is the first of its kind to help policy makers transform the findings of this research into action.

Created in partnership between the UN Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights and ATD Fourth World, the IDEEP tool supports policy makers in designing, implementing, and evaluating anti-poverty policies in direct partnership with people in poverty, ensuring all its dimensions, including those that are “hidden,” are taken into account.

This is crucial, given that policies that do not account for the views and lived experiences of people in poverty tend to be riddled with blind spots, particularly around these hidden dimensions.

The IDEEP tool identified social isolation among disadvantaged communities as an unintended result of a housing project in Mauritius, for example, and institutional maltreatment resulting in fewer people accessing social protection benefits in France.

The right to participation is a human right. Only by upholding it will we achieve better informed, more effective, and more imaginative policy making. Yet the record of participatory processes in

anti-poverty policy making is mixed, with policy makers often simply “informing” or “consulting” people in poverty, rather than recognizing them as the real experts about the obstacles they face.

To combat this, we need to go one step further in our efforts to fulfil the right to participation by introducing the idea of “deliberation,” which is defined in the IDEEP tool as bringing together different groups, including people in poverty, who meet, present arguments based on their unique insights, weigh them up, and propose actionable solutions.

The IDEEP tool offers a new, deliberative approach to anti-poverty policy making, one that recognizes the power imbalances inherent in traditional participatory processes and brings together different groups as equals to debate potential solutions before arriving at a consensus. This is a true merging of knowledge.

This approach is especially urgent as we rapidly head towards 2030, the target year for achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including the goal of eradicating extreme poverty for all people everywhere (SDG1). If we continue on a path of business as usual, we will not achieve this ambitious goal.

We need to widen our perspective and rethink how we can jumpstart a process of inclusive and sustainable growth for all; this includes engaging with those with lived experiences in poverty in the search for meaningful, holistic policy solutions. Without embracing this, efforts to combat poverty—and its hidden dimensions—will fall flat.

(SOURCE: INTER PRESS SERVICE)



# Women in Focus

## Empowering women to ensure sustainable dev't, lasting peace

BY LEULSEGED WORKU

Ensuring the peace and security of women and promoting their equal participation and benefits at all levels is a cross-cutting issue in every country's social, economic and political progress or to achieve aspired national goals.

Across the globe, in most cases, women and girls unevenly face a number of challenges owing to gender-based stereotypes and long attached traditional, cultural and religious misconceptions. As a result, even today in the 21st century, millions of women and girls around the world, mainly women and girls of developing countries, are experiencing the worst deprived of their rights, the era of the 21st century.

Indeed, several initiatives have been started and measures have been taken to empower women thereby ensure their equal rights. Countries, by setting their own policies and adopting international and regional conventions, have undertaken various activities to enhance the social, economic and political participation of women thereby sustaining gender equality. However, the feats gained so far, in comparison with the challenges, are not at the required levels. As a result, even today, millions of women around the world live under male-controlled environments, deprived of their economic, social and political opportunities which call for further effort and concerted action.

The case is not different in Ethiopia. Though efforts have been applied for decades to promote gender-equality and ensure the overall rights of women, there are still numerous bottlenecks that hinder the equal participation and benefits of women. Even these days; hundreds of thousands of women are living in poverty, marginalized from their economic, social and political opportunities as well as experiencing physical and verbal abuse from their counterparts.

However, this does not mean that there is no progress in empowering women and girls at all; because encouraging strides are made in accessing education for girls, helping women to be self-reliant economically through engaging in income generating activities, and bringing more women at the leadership ladder. However, there are also indicators that call for further energy and concerted efforts across a number of sectors.

Speaking in connection with the 118th International Women's Day and celebrated for the 48th time at Adwa Victory Memorial, Addis Ababa under the theme "Let's Empower Women, Let's Ensure Peace and Development,"



President Sahele-Work Zewde also acknowledge the works Ethiopia has been undertaking to promote gender-equality and the achievements scored over the years in bringing women into leadership and ensuring economic opportunities. She also highlighted the need for further progress.

Ethiopian women have contributed a lot in building the image of Ethiopia. Without the active participation of women at the senior position level and having women at the table of power, it is almost impossible to say there is real justice, peace and democracy. Due to this, we have to strive heavily to sustain the success we have achieved in bringing women to the front."

According to her, empowering women brings democracy, good governance and rule of law. The President also emphasized on the positive impacts of empowering rural women in agriculture, accessing education to girls and fighting the visible and invisible gender based violence.

Encouraging initiatives have been taken in Ethiopia to ensure women's participation and their economic benefits, which should be further strengthened. The role of education is incalculable to ensure women empowerment. This is especially true for those Ethiopian women living in rural parts of the country. She also stressed that all forms of gender based violence against women should be halted unconditionally.

Mentioning that women are victims of war who will suffer the most, Sahele-Work said that women should be included in the peace negotiation. "Conflict affects women disproportionately. And our struggle is not to gain special privilege; but it is for equal rights," President Sahele-Work remarked.

Speaking on her part, Addis Ababa City Administration Mayor Adanech Abiebie said that a number of activities are being made to ensure women's all round benefit and empowerment. The City Administration is exerting utmost effort to ensure the benefits of women as its key task, and to this end, activities

are ongoing, she said, stating the works that have been done to ensure women's decision-making including empowering them to have significant political roles in high government leadership positions. In the same way, a number of programs that are vital to ensure the social, economic and political benefits of women were also devised, she added.

Stating the irreplaceable role of women in speeding up the economic progress among the society, Women and Social Affairs Minister, Ergoge Tesfaye (PhD) on her part said that women constitute half of the total population and they have a key role in Ethiopia's development. In this regard, as part of its endeavor to ensure women's equal rights and their active participation in the overall development endeavors of the country, the government is committed to support their effort and will continue strengthening its activities, to ensure all rounded participation of women.

She said that the "International Women's Day" is a fruit of struggle made by determined women who fought against all forms of oppression and claimed the same rights as men to work, speak, and gather and other rights. After years of struggle, their effort has borne fruit and women are able to express their opinion publicly and prove their capabilities in various spheres.

Moreover, International Women's Day is a testament to the relentless fight of women across the world to achieve equality and recognition. It serves as a reminder of the remarkable progress made in the struggle for women's rights, while also shedding light on the challenges that still persist.

Emphasizing that women are the backbone of any society and are pivotal to the progress and stability of any country, she highlighted the government's commitment to promoting gender equality and increasing women's participation in leadership roles.

According to her, significant changes have been seen over the past five years in enhancing women's involvement in decision-making processes and positions of authority. Furthermore, the government

has undertaken extensive initiatives to empower women, enabling them to apply their skills, knowledge, and energy to the advancement of the country. Efforts have been made to elevate women to higher positions within the government and across various levels of authority.

The government is dedicated to establishing a comprehensive system that benefits women across all sectors, not only in positions of power and responsibility, but also in economic, social, and political realms. This holistic approach aims to create an environment where women can thrive and actively participate in shaping the nation's future, the Minister reaffirmed.

In addition to commemorating International Women's Day, the Ministry has been actively engaging in discussions and public mobilization activities with states and city administrations to address issues that are of utmost importance to women. These efforts aimed at fostering dialogue, reinforcing understanding and strengthening collaborative action to address the unique challenges faced by women in different areas.

Furthermore, the Minister highlighted the government's support for vulnerable women and children, with over 23,932 individuals receiving assistance worth more than 99 million Birr. These initiatives reflect the government's commitment to improving the lives and the well-being of women across various fields.

International Women's Day serves as a platform to amplify the voices of women across the world, providing an opportunity to advocate for their rights and their meaningful participation in decision-making processes. It also urges to prioritize women's safety, access to essential services, and economic opportunities, particularly in conflict-affected areas where these rights are often denied.

Preserving peace for women in Ethiopia requires concerted efforts at various levels. It involves promoting inclusive dialogue, conflict resolution and reconciliation processes that actively involve women. Engaging women in peace building efforts not only contributes to the overall effectiveness and sustainability of peace initiatives, but also helps women's voices be heard and address their concerns.

As the world marks International Women's Day, it is crucial to recognize the significance of preserving peace, especially in regions affected by conflict. In the context of Ethiopia, the preservation of peace is of utmost importance, as women often bear the brunt of the consequences of conflict.

# Law & Politics

## Ethiopia's strides in achieving women's rights

BY FITSUM GETACHEW

March 8, the International Women's Day has been celebrated since 113 years ago in the world. In Ethiopia it has been celebrated for the last 48 years annually with various activities such as panel discussions, rallies and public gatherings discussing the problems related to gender disparities and inequalities and how to address them. The significance of March 8 is understandable because it tries to advocate for the rights of women who are more or less half of humanity and continue to be treated unfairly by society in general for a number of reasons.

For centuries women have been considered as not equal as men because it was men who decided the affairs of the states. Women were not considered capable of running the affairs of states. They were deprived of political leadership but they were also sidelined in social and economic affairs especially in prominent leadership positions. Everything was given to men while women were limitedly assigned to household chores. They were principally entrusted with bearing children and growing them. Men were responsible for the harder jobs of working outside the household while the preparation of food and raising the children was the main duty of women.

In many cases women were also deprived of the right to inherit property. In short it was unjust and unfair to treat half of humanity just because of their gender. However in certain communities women worked even harder than men going to fields and working in farms. They were then required to prepare food when they return home after their field duties. They were also required to take care of the children. And yet they were not accorded due respect.

Then began the women's rights movements struggling for equal rights with men. Rallies were held claiming equal rights with men and slowly things began to change until we have reached the current status of women. There are still huge discrepancies between the rights of men and women in many communities and societies. In certain societies the gap has been narrowing at faster pace than others. Women have been given high political status with some countries such as Ethiopia reaching presidenthood and premiership (Uganda) but that can be considered as a drop in the ocean. Women rights advocates would say there is still a lot to be done, a lot to be rectified.

The rights of women have not reached equal status with those of men. There are still prejudicial attitudes towards women. Many still believe that women would not qualify for certain professions but science has shown us that this is not true. In fact it has been demonstrated that there are

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**The sense of patience and caution that women are endowed with helps them make well-pondered decisions that can serve the people they serve**

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not any things that women cannot do that men can. With the exception of the natural physical differences between men and women where may be pure physical strength is needed to carry out certain functions or the one which is natural of bearing children, the difference in the capacity of women as compared to that of men in carrying out any activity is nil. This has been proved repeatedly and there are no scientific evidences of mental disparity between men and women. In certain societies this disparity is more accentuated than in others. What is more, there are also religious beliefs who contribute to exacerbate the problem by not encouraging women to reach the high ranks of leadership in the sector. They have been deprived of their equality with men on unfounded and prejudicial grounds, just because of certain beliefs and suppositions that have become a part of tradition and have not caught up with the years and modern thoughts and findings.

These lifelong prejudicial attitudes held by men against women have prevented women from achieving their ambitions and this has been an obstacle for the full growth of society in general because no society can do away with the contribution of half of its composition. It is a great loss because in many cases there are circumstances in which women may perform better than men in certain professions. Even in leadership women have proved to be even better than men because of their prudence, patience, focus and persistence in their engagements.

In the past few years Ethiopia has made huge strides in the promotion of women's rights in society due to the reforms that the current government has carried out. In fact the current president has been elected during this new administration and it has been hailed as a huge success. The ministerial cabinet is filled with many women leaders including several state ministers and directors general. The parliament has a large representation of

women from multiple ethnic origins and this has brought a new chapter in the history of political representation in Ethiopia. This means that the view of women is also taken into consideration and things have been looked at from the perspective of women as well and not only men.

Focus has been given to the rights of women because there is the realization that women do perform well in many areas of societal functions. For instance it has been stated that women are less prone to corruption than men and hence their enhanced participation in top leadership positions can be taken as a good step to fight corruption and maladministration in society. The sense of patience and caution that women are endowed with helps them make well pondered decisions that can serve the people they serve.

The various women ministers that have been brought to lead in the cabinet have shown how capable they are and a few have even been beneficiaries of special recognition for their exceptionally brilliant performance. There have also been very efficient CEOs leading major companies in Ethiopia and this is another testimony to the trust and confidence built around women. Ethiopia has been hailed by many observers that it has made outstanding strides in the fight for equality between women and men and the old prejudicial attitude has been broken for good.

When the observation of March 8, International Women's Day, was carried out at the Adwa Victory Memorial on March 8, President Sahle-Work Zewde who is considered as the standard bearer of women's rights in Ethiopia made a hugely significant address. She said that women were not asking for anything special as compared to men nor did they ask for more than what is due to them. They are just asking for what is due to them as half of humanity and society. They want equal rights and equal treatment with men. They should not be dismissed based on outdated prejudicial attitudes that cannot

be sustained today.

The participation of women in Ethiopian society has not been well taken or recognized and acknowledged duly. Attempts have been made to dismiss their positive roles in society and yet without them there could not even exist families. President Sahle-Work has always spoken loud about women's rights and her outstanding achievements speak to the status and capacity of women to actively take part in top leadership positions. We have had a decorated Minister of Health in Dr Liya Tadesse who has led the country's efforts to contain the spread of several diseases including COVID 19. We have the outstanding achievements of leading the capital of Ethiopia and Africa in the leadership of Mayor Adanech Abiebie and the top leadership skills of Minister of Works Muferihat Kemil. The CEO of the huge business enterprise that is Ethio Telecom has made huge transformation, expansion and efficiency under Frehiwot Tamru, one of the most brilliant women leaders and we can name many others who are showing Ethiopia's engagement in women's rights and how we can make the best use of women's skills and preparation which before were not given due attention and consideration.

Ethiopia cannot hope to grow as it should by dismissing the relevant contribution of half of its citizens. We all remember the slogan that was widely repeated by the military government of the seventies and eighties which used to declare that 'the revolution cannot hit its objective without the participation of women'. It should be said that the full recognition and equality of women's rights with men have reached higher echelons in socialist countries than the purely capitalist and traditional societies such as Ethiopia. However, the recent advances are catching up and we can now say that no one considers women inferior to men or not capable of doing things that men can.

The old prejudice is fading fast even if there are still certain gaps that need to be filled. Certain die hard societal beliefs may still prevent girls from advancing in their education as they would like to because of families' insistence that they should be married and raise a family. There are also communities who still abuse the rights of women by practicing female genital mutilation. Even if premature marriages are diminishing we cannot say they have stopped totally. There are works that need to be done. Many traditional and cultural attitudes and beliefs that have materialized along centuries are still a challenge for women rights activists to fight and win once and for all. That is why there is still need to amplify the celebrations of March 8 until full equality of rights is achieved throughout the world and particularly in the less developed nations where the problem is more acute and damaging, very discriminatory of women.

# Society



## Prioritizing digitalization, ensuring socio-economic transformation

BY TEWODROS KASSA

In today's rapidly evolving world, digitalization has become a crucial factor in driving socio-economic development. Countries around the globe are investing heavily in digital technologies to streamline processes, improve efficiency, and enhance the overall quality of life for their citizens. As technology continues to evolve at a rapid pace, countries around the world are leveraging digitalization to drive socio-economic transformation. Ethiopia is also working massively through recognizing the importance of prioritizing digitalization to ensure socio-economic transformation.

Digitalization refers to the process of integrating digital technologies into various aspects of society, including government services, businesses, healthcare, education, and more. By harnessing the power of digital technologies such as artificial intelligence, block chain, and cloud computing, countries can revolutionize their operations and create innovative solutions to complex challenges.

According to experts in the field, embracing digitalization offers numerous benefits for developing countries like Ethiopia. It can help streamline bureaucratic processes, reduce corruption, and improve transparency in government operations. By digitizing services such as healthcare and education, the country can reach more citizens and provide better access to essential resources. Additionally, digitalization can drive economic growth by attracting foreign investment and creating new opportunities for local businesses.

So far, to realize the digitalization journey the government eyes developing a comprehensive strategy that addresses key areas of focus. This includes investing in digital infrastructure,

promoting digital literacy among citizens, establishing robust data protection laws, and fostering collaboration between the public and private sectors, among others.

One effective way to drive digital transformation is through Public-Private Partnerships (PPP), where the government works closely with businesses and organizations to leverage their expertise and resources. By creating a conducive environment for innovation and entrepreneurship, Ethiopia can attract investment and spur growth in the digital sector.

While the benefits of digitalization are clear, Ethiopia faces several challenges in implementing widespread digital transformation. Limited access to reliable internet infrastructure, low levels of digital literacy, and inadequate regulatory frameworks are some of the barriers that the country must address. Additionally, ensuring data privacy and cyber security are crucial considerations in the digital age.

However, these challenges also present opportunities for Ethiopia to leapfrog traditional development pathways and adopt cutting-edge technologies. By investing in digital infrastructure, providing training programs for digital skills and fostering a culture of innovation, Ethiopia can position itself as a leader in the digital economy.

Recently, the Ministry of Innovation and Technology (MoIT) stated that it is working to realize digital Ethiopia so as to improve productivity and service delivery.

Digitizing the sectors like agriculture, manufacturing, tourism and information technology can help to get huge benefits, secure the ecosystem of the nation and ensure the country's competitiveness globally, said MoIT State Minister Yeshurun Alemayehu (PhD) during the concluding event of Digital Ethiopia

Week.

To ensure digital Ethiopia soon, he expressed that all the aforementioned sectors are expected to be digitalized to avail huge benefit and the country ought to enter into the digital economy, develop and ensure technological advancement by expanding infrastructure including building a data center.

According to Yeshurun, digitizing the manufacturing, agriculture and tourism sectors is crucial to advance productivity and efficiency thereby securing better income. To this end, ensuring digitalization by expanding information technology would help to provide quality goods and services.

"If we implement the aforesaid things properly, we can ensure digital Ethiopia. The government is designing strategies to achieve the aforesaid (ambitions) in years to come," he said.

Moreover, building and creating integrated digital financial platforms like Telebirr and M-pesa – mobile payment services, helps to facilitate a secured ecosystem, he stressed.

As to him, the nation needs to build a digital ecosystem that regulates all sectors at a time when they run their daily businesses or provide services for the community.

"What we are going to build is the one platform to interact with various government sectors together to ease the load work environment in a sustainable manner."

When organizations apply digital schemes and use locally developed operating systems, they can secure national interest and utilize human resources in an efficient manner.

The State Minister also expressed that his Ministry is striving to realize digital Ethiopia by designing a twenty-year perspective plan, he said.

Accordingly, with the rapid adoption of digital technologies across various sectors, Ethiopia is witnessing a significant shift towards a more connected and efficient economy. Digitalization technology has the potential to revolutionize the way businesses operate, enabling them to streamline processes, improve efficiency, and drive innovation. In Ethiopia, the adoption of digital technologies such as e-commerce platforms, mobile payment systems, and online banking services have opened up new opportunities for businesses to reach a wider market and improve their competitiveness.

By embracing digitalization, Ethiopian businesses are able to reduce costs, increase productivity, and enhance customer satisfaction. This, in turn, is fueling economic growth and creating new job opportunities for the country's growing workforce. As more businesses digitize their operations, the overall efficiency of the economy is improving, leading to greater prosperity for all Ethiopians.

Moreover, one of the key benefits of digitalization technology is its ability to empower communities and individuals, especially those in remote or underserved areas. In Ethiopia, digital technologies are being used to provide access to essential services such as healthcare, education, and financial services to remote communities that were previously underserved.

In sum, by embracing digital technologies and leveraging them to drive innovation, the country can overcome challenges, create new opportunities, and improve the quality of life for its citizens through prioritizing digitalization. With the right strategies and partnerships in place, Ethiopia can harness the power of digitalization to accelerate its development and thrive in the digital age.



## Published Weekly in Collaboration with Haramaya University

### HU launches national unique DrPH program

BY EPHREM ANDARGACHEW

Haramaya University (HU) has held a lunching workshop program for the Doctor of Public Health (DrPH). HU will begin offering a third-degree DrPH program next year.

The national public health doctoral program launch was hosted by HU in collaboration with Addis Ababa University and the Ministry of Health. The courses that HU had designed for the DrPH degree were presented and debated during the launch program.

HU College of Health and Medical Science Chief Executive Director Dr. Ahmed Mohammed said that the DrPH is a terminal degree with a broad focus and diversified skills addressing public health practice and contextualized to the current public health problem when compared to a Ph.D. in public health. "DrPH, on the other hand, prepares highly prepared individuals for advanced public health practice and healthcare leadership roles."

The curriculum offers advanced public health education coupled with mastery of leadership, management, communication, and creative thinking. "It is a first-of-its-kind, interdisciplinary degree. Because of this, the curriculum has been specially created to turn out highly skilled individuals who are prepared to tackle the public health issues of the twenty-first century through practice-based research and efficient public



Dr. Ahmed Mohammed

health emergency responses," he explained.

He further stated that HU has unique opportunities and resources for the effective implementation of the DrPH program, such as the MPH/MSc and Ph.D. programs within the SPH and CHMS, which provide a solid basis for the DrPH program. Furthermore, the presence of well-equipped laboratories, a teaching hospital, and research facilities develops the student's learning and research environment.

HU Public Health and Adolescent Health, and A/ Director of Research and Publications, CHMS, HMS Associate Professor Dr. Lemessa Oljira, stated that the program is designed to produce highly trained PH professionals for advanced public health practice and leadership roles in the



health system.

In contrast to a Ph.D. in public health, which focuses on advanced research and statistical analysis leading to dissertation work with an in-depth investigation of a specific PH problem, a DrPH focuses on foundational research leading to doctoral projects focused on evidence synthesis or translation to find solutions to major PH problems.

It is also intended to produce high-level PH professionals or practitioners capable of developing and implementing PH programs and policies, as well as providing high-level leadership within health systems. Furthermore, the training strategy necessitates practical or field immersion training to identify real-world public health issues and develop and test alternative solutions in practice,

he added.

He also mentioned that DrPH specialists are extremely essential and demanding in Ethiopia and across Africa. The DrPH program necessitates a distinct training method that goes beyond standard campus-based training, which necessitates orientation and re-orientation of course facilitators, academic advisers, and field mentors. As a result, he urged stakeholders to commit to supporting, allocating, and/or mobilizing resources to ensure the success of DrPH training.

The launching workshop program was attended by representatives from the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, and Universities, as well as Regional Health Offices and Health Institutions.

## World's first AI-developed drug for deadly lung disease enters landmark clinical trials in China, US

An experimental drug designed with the help of artificial intelligence (AI) to target an aggressive and often fatal lung disease has entered phase 2 clinical trials in China and the United States – a world first for an AI-generated drug, according to AI drug discovery firm Insilico Medicine.

The company said its AI-led methodology has made drug discovery faster and more efficient and is proof of "the promising potential of generative AI technologies for transforming the industry".

Insilico is a global biotech company with offices and researchers in Hong Kong and mainland China, Europe, the Middle East and North America.

The company's founder and CEO, Alex Zhavoronkov, told the Post that while generative AI has only become widely known in recent years, he has been researching its applications for biomedical research for a decade.

"The integration of AI, robotics and ageing research will allow us to find complete cures to very complicated diseases like Alzheimer's and Parkinson's, and many others," Zhavoronkov said, adding that AI has the potential to provide humans with tools to completely avoid these diseases.

In 2014, the company started training deep neural networks to understand human ageing, leveraging AI capabilities to record, track and analyse people's health

throughout their lives.

"AI can understand billions of people just by understanding ageing. It can then start understanding the basic biology of diseases, and not only to slow them down," Zhavoronkov said.

"In the ideal scenario, you want to ensure that the disease completely disappears or it does not happen at all."

"Human biology and the homeostasis (state of balance among body systems) of your body degrades over time. That is what is happening in a disease. Diseases accelerate this process, or are caused by this process. So without understanding the process of basic human ageing, you will not understand most of the diseases," he said.

Idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis (IPF) results in chronic scarring of lung tissue that makes breathing difficult. The disease affects 5 million people worldwide, mostly above the age of 60, and has a high mortality rate. The median survival rate of untreated patients is two to three years.

There is no known cause of the disease and no cure is available, but some treatments can help alleviate symptoms and slow its progression. Many patients who receive steroids suffer from progressive decline in lung function and succumb to respiratory failure.

In the new study, scientists used generative AI to find an anti-fibrotic target and its

inhibitor, significantly shortening the traditional drug development timeline which can often span more than a decade.

"This work was completed in roughly 18 months from target discovery to preclinical candidate nomination and shows the capabilities of our generative AI-driven drug-discovery pipeline," the team said in an article published in the peer-reviewed journal Nature Biotechnology on Friday.

The researchers first trained a target identification engine in Insilico's AI platform using data and publications about fibrosis. The condition results in a thickening or scarring of tissues that can reduce organ elasticity. Fibrosis is closely related to the process of ageing, which generates chronic inflammation resulting in fibrosis.

With the help of a predictive AI approach, a protein abbreviated as TNIK emerged as the top anti-fibrotic target. The team then used a generative chemistry engine to generate about 80 small-molecule candidates to find the optimal inhibitor, known as INS018\_055.

"[The inhibitor] exhibits desirable drug-like properties and anti-fibrotic activity across different organs ... through oral, inhaled or topical administration," the scientists wrote.

The study "provides evidence that generative AI platforms offer time-efficient

solutions for generating target-specific drugs with potent anti-fibrotic activity", they said.

"We believe that this study underscores the strength of AI-enabled drug-discovery approaches, which will likely revolutionise drug discovery."

The company said the simultaneous phase 2a clinical trials of INS018\_055 taking place in China and the US with 60 patients each will evaluate its safety, tolerability and pharmacokinetics – how the body interacts with a substance over time – as well as its preliminary efficacy on lung function in IPF patients.

When asked about the importance of artificial intelligence in the drug discovery research, Insilico's AI chatbot, which is based on ChatGPT, said: "By streamlining the initial stages of drug discovery, AI enables us to reach the clinical trial phase more rapidly, focusing resources and efforts on these critical stages of development.

"While AI has the potential to accelerate early-stage drug discovery tasks such as target identification and lead optimisation, it does not substantially reduce the duration of clinical trials. Clinical trial phases still require extensive time for ethical and regulatory approval, patient recruitment, treatment duration and data analysis," the chatbot said.

Source:- South China Morning post