



The Ethiopian Herald

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EU pledges to foster its strategic partnership with Ethiopia

• Extends 645 mln Euros to AUC

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

ADDIS ABABA - The European Union (EU) has revealed interest to elevate its strategic partnership and cooperation with Ethiopia in different areas of mutual interest.

EU Ambassador to Ethiopia Roland Kobia confirmed the interest from member states of the Union to foster the cooperation during the press briefing with local media yesterday. "We have enjoyed strategic partnership with Ethiopia in health, economy, education, infrastructure, trade, migration, people-to-people ties and other arenas and it is in the interest of the Union to advance the collaboration."

The EU has also been trying to help Ethiopia's digitalization process and its efforts to connect with the East African region as well as at a continental level. Moreover, the EU has been facilitating political and development activities in Addis Ababa.

According to him, the EU is the second largest trade destination for Ethiopian exports and as part of economy and trade,

See EU pledges ... Page 3



UN lauds Ethiopia's wisdom to deal with health challenges

BY GIRMACHEW GASHAW

ADDIS ABABA—UNFPA Executive Director Natalia Kanem (MD) appreciated Ethiopia's wisdom dubbed Community Health Extension System in which the nation enables to thrive in redressing health challenges across Ethiopia.

See UN lauds ... Page 3



Sultan Walle (PhD, Eng.)

MoWE calls on partners to enhance energy production, supply

• Approves six-year energy dev't strategy

BY ASHENAFI ANIMUT

ADDIS ABABA - The Ministry of Water and Energy (MoWE) has called on stakeholders and other development actors to actively engage in improving energy production and supply.

See MoWE calls on ... Page 3

Gov't establishes digital transformation council

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

ADDIS ABABA-The government has established a Digital Transformation Council which consolidates efforts of startups and enterprises and gives growth potentials that would create a conducive environment for innovative businesses.

MoLS Minister Muferihat Kamil made the above remark yesterday in a workshop held for startups at the Science Museum.

Speaking at the occasion, the minister indicated that the council would create a digital platform and would facilitate conditions to startups and innovators to be benefited from their works in a sustainable manner.

The digital transformation council led by

See Gov't establishes ... Page 3



Photo: Hadush Abraba

News

EEU, Huawei Technologies forge alliance to expand green energy

BY YESUF ENDRIS

ADDIS ABABA- The Ethiopian Electric Utility (EEU) and Huawei Technologies PLC signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) yesterday to accelerate the adoption of green energy solutions.

The EEU also mentioned the agreement, which was signed at the Ethiopia Green Energy Summit 2024, as 'a pivotal step' towards leveraging technological innovation for sustainable development.

The agreement, which was signed by the EEU CEO and Huawei-Ethiopia CEO, is also said to underscore a shared commitment to fight climate change and enhance energy accessibility nationwide.

Huawei -Ethiopia CEO Michael Lue stated on the occasion that the company, renowned for its expertise in renewable energy solutions, will collaborate with EEU to introduce cutting-edge solar fusion technologies. The collaboration aims to diversify Ethiopia's energy mix and extend electricity access to rural communities.

The CEO also expressed his company's desire to supply state-of-the-art green energy devices tailored to the Ethiopian market's needs. By harnessing solar fusion solutions,



Photo Gebabo Gebrie

Huawei aims to address the country's growing power demand while mitigating environmental degradation associated with traditional energy sources.

Ethio telecom's Chief Technologies Officer Tariku Demissie indicated the urgency of transitioning towards sustainable energy alternatives. "As ethio telecom embraces green energy solutions across its operations, the partnership with Huawei Technologies signals a positive shift in Ethiopia's energy

sector, paving the way for a greener and more resilient future."

IPCOM Technologies CEO Tagel Molla for his part emphasized the critical role of technological innovation in driving the green energy agenda forward. As businesses increasingly prioritize sustainability, technological advancements are poised to catalyze transformative change, propelling Ethiopia towards a more sustainable energy ecosystem.



Ethiopia plans building 14 power distribution substations

BY ESSEYE MENGISTE

ADDIS ABABA- Ethiopian Electric Power announced that 14 power distribution substations and transmission lines are going to be built at a cost of 500 million USD.

Ethiopian Electric Power Chief Executive Engineer Ashebir Balcha said that 14 power distribution projects worth over 500 million USD will be constructed with a financial support from the World Bank.

Engineer Ashebir stated that preliminary works are being done to complete the projects in the next three years.

Since the projects include the operation of the Ethiopian Electric Utility, he noted, the previous problems related to power outages will be addressed.

Accordingly, the renovation of power transmissions is being done to solve the problem as it is not related to power generation other than lack of maintenance.

He pointed out that although power plants can last for 50 to 100 years when they are built, electro-mechanical materials should be renewed every 20 years.

Ethiopia has the capacity to generate up to 10,000 megawatts from solar and steam, he said, adding that the construction of Koyisha

generation project is well underway with the completion of 65 percent of the project.

Having said that maintenance works are being done at power distribution and generating stations, Ashebir mentioned Tekeze and other power plants that require renovation.

He added that his organization is investing the income from the sale of foreign electricity for the Koyisha power plant and other power generation and distribution facilities that need renovation.

The institution's recent approval from the World Bank will contribute to the success of these projects.

Partners to pledge new funding for humanitarian support

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

ADDIS ABABA- Humanitarian partners and friends of Ethiopia are said to come together for the upcoming high-level pledging event for the humanitarian situation in Ethiopia to pledge new funding in Geneva on April 16, 2024.

During the event which is co-hosted by the government of Ethiopia, UNOCHA and UK government, partner countries are expected to express common positions for the conference, reflect collective view on the current humanitarian position and dynamic in Ethiopia.

Millions of people throughout the country are affected by multiple and sometimes overlapping disasters including conflicts economic and climate shocks, as to the press release.

Thus, partners and friends of Ethiopia have expressed their recognition to the pivotal role to be played by the government of Ethiopia, in responding to the humanitarian situation as primary duty bearer, with the support from international community.

They also strongly support the event and commit to mobilizing resources for assisting and protecting the most vulnerable population in the most severely affected areas of the country.

While strongly supporting the call for expanded humanitarian funding, partner countries have requested the government of Ethiopia to prioritize public funding to the most pressing emergency needs, increase pro-poor policies and routinely report on its assistance.

Moreover, they called for reinforce accountability efforts to prevent diversion and ensure that assistances reach the most vulnerable including IDPs as well as lift bureaucratic impediments on humanitarian actors, among others.

Similarly, partner countries have also urged international humanitarian partners to improve needs and vulnerability based prioritization and targeting mechanisms to ensure lifesaving assistances reaches the most vulnerable, it stated.

Likewise, they called for the humanitarian partners to implement recommendations of the February 2024 UN peer-to-peer review mission including re-focusing on international humanitarian law and centrality protection, among others.

News

MoFA repatriates 842 undocumented citizens

BY MESERET BEHAILU

ADDIS ABABA – Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) announced that some 842 undocumented Ethiopian migrants have returned home from Saudi Arabia.

Welcoming the returnees yesterday, MoFA Spokesperson, Nebiyu Tedela said that the government is working to bring over 70,000 Ethiopians home from Saudi Arabia in the next four months as part of its citizen-oriented diplomacy.

To facilitate the repatriation, he expressed that a national committee consisting of 16 government institutions has discussed with Saudi officials.

According to MoFA, there will be 12 flights a week for the next four months in order to smooth the returning process.

Among the repatriates, Mekasha Arega had spent over 200,000 Birr for illegal brokers to leave his motherland to Saudi Arabia for a better life. However, it didn't take him long



Photo: Berihun Tadele

to be thrown behind bars and languished there until he returned home.

“Illegal immigration has many negative aspects though citizens are still going overseas due to various reasons. I have spent a year and a month in jail in Saudi experiencing difficulties including beatings,” he said.

It is to be recalled that a high level Ethiopian delegation led by MoFA State Minister Birtukan Ayano has met with Saudi delegation led by Deputy Foreign Minister, Ali Al-Yousef in Riyadh and exchanged views on ways to repatriate undocumented Ethiopian migrants from Saudi Arabia and enhance the bilateral relations of the two countries.

UN lauds...

In an exclusive interview with *The Ethiopian Herald*, Kanem said that UNFPA has worked for years embedding in the country to understand a lot of wisdom in this country.

“There is a lot of energy in this country”, the General Director said adding that these types of pioneered arrangements which make Ethiopia effective in health related matters, should be served as a model for the rest of Africa and the world as well.”

Asked about UN's priority areas for the future as the sustainable development goals (SDG) is left six years to phase out, the director replied that these 17 sustainable development goals were agreed upon by all of the 193 member states of the United Nations, including every African country.

“The theme of the sustainable development goals is to leave no one behind. “We have to ask who is being left behind. If I am in my village, if I am in my mountain home, if I live on an island, as human beings, we all have equal rights.”

The director added that the year 2030 is approaching rather quickly. “Every time we have war and conflict, it derails our ability to work in unison and concert. Every time we see climate change and we do nothing about it, it means more drought, more floods, and more cyclones. It also means the lack of employment that young people worry about.”

“Our Secretary General, Antonio Guterres, has announced a summit of the future to take place during the time of the United Nations General Assembly in New York in September. And during that summit of the future, the question of rescuing the sustainable development goals will be the top priority,” he added.

Gov't establishes...

Deputy Prime Minister Temesgen Tirunch would consolidate efforts to back startups and for enterprises and help those to have immense growth potentials and create favorable situations that help them to execute what they are going to do. The ecosystem brings the public and private institutions to wage collaborative engagement and the government is ready to contribute its share in this regard, she elaborated.

“The created system follows up and facilitates startups to have financial backing with four basic pillars and four working groups which considers policy, monitoring and evaluation layers. Enabling conditions helps startups to flourish, sustain their innovation by creating a good market

system to fill their demand. We have a consistent approach for startups by testing their newly created things that appear in the nation to be tangible and bring realistic results.”

Muferihat added, “The focus areas of work is cultivate students and startup skills in early time in further way by using resource we have, develop startup skills, create platform to get online entrepreneurship then invest on talent youths is our main goals. The government is demonstrating determination to try startup initiatives to make them successful.”

The government has designed 36 reform agendas and four thematic areas and one of the thematic areas is soft skill component

for quality work, to answer the demand of Ethiopia's economy and to create more jobs thereby narrowing the mismatch between the demand and supply of new jobs.

According to the minister, the focus is on building soft skill and entrepreneurship by cultivating and nurturing the youth skill to satisfy Ethiopia's market demand.

Finance State Minister Eyob Tekalign (PhD) said at the event that collective efforts need to make such activities effective and a sandbox approach is created to help startups as well as additional funds required to inject for startup to create a favorable environment and to bring great impact to the nation.

EU pledges...

the Union made different agreements to promote the latter's private sector. “The budget suspension would be released when Ethiopia has an agreement with the IMF. The World Bank Group, bilateral donors and the EU are waiting for a macroeconomic framework solution in the country.”

Ethiopia is one of the EU's strategic partners globally and they have established strong political and economic cooperation while the Union is committed to elevate the collaboration in different fields of significant importance.

Commenting on the deforestation regulation, Ambassador Kobia stated that Ethiopia has a real interest to fight and mitigate climate change and to adopt the regulation as its integral law.

For his part, the EU Ambassador to the African Union Javier Niño Pérez

said that the Union has been working to support and promote peace and stability in the African continent in a bid to address the full spectrum of instability and chaos. “The EU is also providing capacity building training to African military, police and judiciary personnel.

As part of the EU-AU partnership, it is working to promote international cooperation, fight and mitigate climate change, strengthen the multilateral trading system and others. The EU member countries respect the freedom of speech and expression, human rights protection and other critical issues, he added.

During last year, the EU financed 645 million Euros to the African Union Commission (AUC). “We believe in European integration as African integration,” Ambassador Pérez emphasized.

MoWE calls...

The National Sustainable Energy Development Strategy (N-SEDS), which is to be undertaken from 2024 to 2030, validated yesterday in the presence of federal and states' energy bureau representatives, private and development actors with the view of ensuring sustainable energy future through leveraging renewable energy sources by 2030.

Speaking at the validation workshop yesterday, MoWE's State Minister Eng. Sultan Walle (PhD) said that the ministry has been establishing a group of experts and partners to improve the sustainability of energy supply, energy production and efficiency and expansion of sustainable energy sources.

Aligning with the country's homegrown economic and sustainable energy development strategy, the State Minister underscored that the involvement of stakeholders at all levels would be a significant milestone towards implementing legal frameworks, strategies and policies to ensure sustainable energy development.

Therefore, he said the development of this national sustainable energy strategy stated in the above stated time frame would play a significant role towards improving the sector the contribute a lot to the nation's inclusive growth.

Ha said: “Sustainable energy development has become the prime focus across the globe due to energy security, economic growth and climate change.”

Moreover, he said involvement of private sectors in power generation, infrastructure expansion and sales is also highly required, he noted.

Having said the power sector situation in Ethiopia requires huge amounts of investment, he emphasized that private sector participation in electricity generation, infrastructure expansion and sales is highly essential in easing high investment requirements.

In this endorsed strategic scheme, it is projected to scale up the electric accessibility from the current 52% to 72% across the country.

Opinion

Ethiopia's move towards using Abbay Dam purely to transform its people's life

BY MENGESHA AMARE

It is a concrete fact and firm stance that Ethiopia doesn't have any intention to harm lower riparian countries apart from relentlessly endeavoring to lift itself out of the grip of poverty it finds itself in and the backwardness from which its citizens are suffering. Of the various schemes the country has been devising to do so, damming the Abbay River comes at the forefront. True, this colossal dam is nearing completion on Ethiopia's stretch of the Nile, a project so large that it promises to set the country on a path to industrialization that could lift tens of millions of citizens out of poverty and darkness.

Downstream in Egypt, where the Nile meets the sea, a starkly different picture emerges: The Dam is a giant, menacing barrier that could be used to hold back the source of nearly all the country's water. However, it is a mere threat diametrically different from what Ethiopia has been thinking of. The Dam has obviously stoked intense nationalistic fervor in both Ethiopia and Egypt.

Ethiopians see building the dam as a fundamental right, one that could bring electricity to the more than half of Ethiopians who don't have access to electricity at home. Egyptians see their fate potentially falling into foreign hands if the Abbay Dam is completed and gets operational in full swing. Bearing this in mind, the country has tried to pull Nile waters to the desert and sprinkled in vain. Apart from the damage emanates from the Aswan Dam evaporation, Egypt's attempt to get the Nile water evaporate in the desert doesn't hold water and except reflecting a sole envy of Ethiopia's water resource use, which is a full, legitimate and natural right.

The Dam, a 1.1-mile-long concrete colossus, is set to become the largest hydro power plant in Africa. Across Ethiopia, poor farmers and rich business executives alike eagerly await the 5 gigawatts of electricity as the dam will ultimately provide every citizen with bright light and prime development motor. Yet, as thousands of workers toil day and night to finish the project, Ethiopian negotiators remain locked in talks over how the Dam will affect downstream neighbors, principally Egypt and then Sudan. No, this is not the normal and right sentiment.

The undeniable fact along this line is that the two countries, Egypt and Sudan, also heavily dependent on Nile water from Ethiopia and they have tried in vain for years to forge a deal on how quickly the Dam's reservoir should be filled. Egypt, anticipating droughts, has demanded that it be filled slowly, over more than a decade. Ethiopia, which built the Dam largely with its own money, wants the reservoir full and

generating the maximum electricity as soon as it is completed, and planned to benefit it deserves within the shortest time possible.

With or without an agreement, the Dam is an imminent reality, and people in both countries are preparing for what it may bring. The real fact is Ethiopia will continue utilizing its natural gift, but without any intention to impose a significant harm on the downstream riparian nations especially Egypt and Sudan.

Unequivocally, anticipation more reliable and efficient electricity, the government and its people have seriously capitalized on the construction of the Dam and it has started bearing fruits. What Egypt has failed to understand so far is even without the Dam, many of the delta's irrigation canals are running dry. Besides, a multitude of factors including climate change, poor maintenance, mismanagement and illegal water siphoning have dehydrated the already thirsty country.

It is expected and natural too to anticipate that further water shortages and their effect on agriculture could have dire consequences for Egypt's people, but the Nile water is more than enough if managed and handled properly and in a firm cooperative manner.

Ethiopians have waited a long time depriving human rights and dignity. For instance, mothers have been recurrently forced to give birth in the dark; girls have to fetch wood for fire instead of going to school. In such a devastating scenario, Ethiopians have waited so many years for this, for centuries, of course. If Ethiopia has to be a beacon of prosperity and role model for all African countries, this is the right time, indeed!

Though water from the Nile that irrigates the farms in Egypt's fertile Delta region, farmers fear that if the Grand Abbay Dam is completed in Ethiopia, their livelihoods will be greatly affected, but not as it has been merely inculcated in the minds of the generation stating 'Egypt is the gift of the Nile setting aside the origin of the largest amount of the water, an ancient and affluent nation-Ethiopia. Egypt is pulling the Abbay waters to the desert and gets it aimlessly evaporated.

The best thing instead of acting antagonistically with Ethiopia's effort here either Egypt or Sudan are expected to move in unison with Ethiopia for effectively combating the growing water shortages triggered by climate change and population growth that have altered their life.

Blaming the Dam obviously leads nowhere. Egypt's politicians and pundits have to correct their thinking not to portray Ethiopia as the cause of this crisis, neglecting that millions of Ethiopians have been living in darkness and poverty.

Frankly speaking, the Dam won't contribute to water shortages in Egypt as it merely rolls turbines and continue travelling forward.

It has to be abundantly made clear that Ethiopia has never had any intention to harm its neighbor as what it is essentially doing is to meet its electricity demands from one of the cleanest sources of energy. Besides, the country cannot afford to continue keeping more than 65 million of its people in the dark and gloomy living scenario.

Even measures put in place to reduce water volume of the Abbay Dam are illegitimate and merely evil mindedness.

The idea reflecting the Dam's promise of regular electricity is as potent a symbol of change in Ethiopia as it is of dread in Egypt is false and unacceptable since the two countries can be benefited out it fairly, it is a matter of coordination genuinely understand the concepts.

As economic growth in Ethiopia has been stifled by lack of electricity and industry margins are hollowed out by the nightmare of daily, unpredictable power cuts, Ethiopia's construction of the Dam can absolutely be regarded as a matter of life and death.

Of course, it takes a huge amount of electricity to run huge business, modern agriculture and mammoth industrial plants. No doubt, Ethiopia's lack of electricity contributes to an economic lag that in turn has left the country in an immensely precarious situation. Without industry, hundreds of thousands have fled endemic poverty on perilous, often deadly quests to find work abroad. Unemployed youth who stay behind are blamed for repeated bouts of political violence. Girls in rural areas — where more than 80% of the country lives — are expected to fetch firewood for cooking, precluding millions from going to school.

Further away still is the promise of rural electrification. More than 840 million people worldwide lack electricity access, including most Ethiopians and nearly half of all Africans. But building new distribution lines will be at least as costly as the Dam itself, Wheeler said, and their construction has barely started. It isn't uncommon to see four generations of women from the same family, the youngest and oldest both stooped under the weight of the wood.

Like many other countries in the world, Ethiopia has to effectively utilize its own rivers for different developmental activities and tourism undertakings. As it is well recognized that rivers constitute major tourism resources via providing countries with spectacular settings, recreational and transport facilities, a series of heritage and adventure, as well as linking environmental and ecological scenes, Ethiopia is well

capitalizing on its water resources such as what it is doing on the Abbay River.

In Ethiopia, which is the land of many rivers, river tourism holds much potential as a form of sustainable tourism. The places get identified by the river flowing by it, the beautiful natural setting and the various river-based activities attracting tourists, thus branding those places as river tourism destinations would be an incomparable means to help the nation solicit great benefit out of the sector. The seventy recreational centers established around the grand Dam are the living testimony for this fact.

True, the development of river tourism in Ethiopia and its various contributions in terms of conservation of the Abbay river and its surrounding environment as well as creating opportunities for sustainable livelihood of the river-based community is greatly useful. The relationship between river and tourism is really of paramount impertinence in boosting economic growth thereby seeing poverty and backwardness off for good from the soil.

The Ethiopian government has highlighted the tourism potential of the Dam, particularly the islands created in the area, stressing that the project will unlock the country's development opportunities. Such a bold move has to be well expanded into other rivers and Ethiopia has to have a number of dams using its rivers.

Since the Dam is now about to be completed, all citizens have to cooperate well for its effective and successful accomplishment. Yes, the Dam is now home to many islands which have immense tourism destination development potential. There are many possibilities for Ethiopians on the horizon if they are committed enough to work in unison to unlock the country's national budding.

Rural areas and in particular mountain territories have been experiencing an increasing appreciation of natural and heritage resources and their use for recreational and leisure activities, boosting tourism development and generating renewed functions with economic and social impact.

Dam recreational centers have been becoming increasingly important for leisure and tourism, with many activities associated and many users seeking for them. Since there is a growing demand for these recreational centers, the country has to allow investors, be they are local or international, to work more on the places so as to help the nation hop steps forward.

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

Editorial

Capitalizing on startups for sustainable dev't

For nations like Ethiopia, with high population most of which are employment seeker youths, capitalizing on startups is essential. Ethiopia's commitment to become hub of global startups, in this regard, is a vivid ambition for sustainable development, as of Global Innovation Initiative Group (GIIG).

The GIIG Co-Founder Jo Griffiths recently told *The Ethiopian Herald* that Ethiopia is ambitious to become a significant role player in Africa's startups landscape with a supportive government, international partnerships, and the growing young talent.

It is good news for Ethiopia's ambition for the venture as the Co-Founder pledged that her group assists Ethiopian startups through facilitating access to funding, mentorship, and international visibility.

Talented Ethiopian job seekers are opportune hearing this news that inculcates into them the spirit of getting changed working on their land instead of looking for the illusion of becoming rich going overseas via taking multiple of risks including losing their lives.

On top of creating self employees, the startups are profitable in advancing innovation and technology for Ethiopia. As to the GIIG Co-Founder, Ethiopia is hub of many startup promoters in Africa and the hosting country of startup awards Africa next year. And this gives Ethiopian youths to look inside their talents and act accordingly. To engage in startups locally, with no hesitation, is less risky than longing for harvesting the wealth the foreigners accumulated which is hard to achieve and accompanied by various dangers including baseless hatred even if it is so.

Though it is less risky, startups need special consideration for there are a number of different factors that entrepreneurs must think of as they try to get their new business off the ground and begin operations. Location that can make or break the business; legal structure that best fits their entity; and seed money or funding the startups among others are some of the factors the entrepreneurs should think over in advance.

Equals to any business, a startup is accompanied by its own advantages and disadvantages. There are a variety of advantages to working for a startup. As startups have fewer employees than large, established companies, employees tend to wear many hats, working in a variety of roles, which leads to more responsibility as well as opportunities to learn.

Startups tend to be more relaxed in nature, making the workplace more of a communal experience, with flexible hours, increased employee interaction, and flexibility. Startups tend to also have better workplace benefits, such as nurseries for children, free food, and shorter workweeks. The work at startups can also be more rewarding as innovation is welcomed and managers allow talented employees to run with ideas with little supervision.

Understanding startups fully also necessitates accepting the disadvantageous part of the venture. One of the primary disadvantages of a startup is increased risk. This primarily applies to the success and longevity of a startup. New businesses need to prove themselves and raise capital before they can start turning a profit. Keeping investors happy with the startup's progress is critical. The risk of shutting down or not having enough capital to continue operations before turning a profit is ever-present.

Be it is, no need to think that lion lies on the road and give up to engage in any startup. Being optimist helps when coming up to challenges and looking for experiences of other countries in the sector can raise the spirit of 'I can do'.

Apart from developed countries that are successful in startups, there are more than 12 African countries among the best in emerging and developing countries that include Kenya, Uganda, Ghana, Nigeria South Africa, Ethiopia and Botswana. Experiences can be gained from these countries enable many to be initiated for new startups. Besides, supports the above mentioned group can provide along with the government's commitment to create new environment invigorate Ethiopian startups and make successful the country's ambition to become startup hub.



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Opinion

Supporting startups to transform the economy from nothing to something and beyond

BY STAFF REPORTER

Ethiopia is a developing country with the second largest population number in the continent which is estimated at more than 120 million. Out of the total population a vast majority is believed to be young. This means it has a population that can contribute greatly to its economic development provided the necessary support like education, training, entrepreneurial opportunities, financial access, among others.

So far the country's economy has largely depended on agriculture, manufacturing, tourism ... etc. These sectors have been the main stay of the economy as they provide foreign currency as well as job creation. While foreign currency is a baseline issue for every economy in the globe, for a populous country like Ethiopia job creation is also a vital issue. The ultimate consideration made in the growth of the economy is, among other things, how much it has benefited the population through income generation, job creation and improving their livelihood.

Hence, a government should devise ways to make sure that the population benefits properly from the growth. In this regard creating a favorable ecosystem for the operation of startups is mandatory. The government of Ethiopia is also working seriously in promoting startups so as to benefit the job seeking as well as speed up the development of the economy.

A startup is a company or organization in its early stages, typically characterized by high uncertainty and risk. Many startups are founded with the aim of solving a problem or filling a gap in the market, and they typically operate in fast-paced and dynamic environments.

Startups are important for a number of reasons. Firstly, they are often the source of new and innovative ideas. This is because startups are typically founded by people who are passionate about their idea and are willing to take risks to make it a reality. Secondly, startups play a key role in driving economic growth. They create new jobs and wealth, and they often bring new products and services to the market. Finally, startups are important for social progress. They can help to tackle societal problems and improve peoples' lives.

Startups matter because they are the source of new and innovative ideas, they drive economic growth, and they promote social progress.

Startups are often founded by entrepreneurial individuals who have a vision for a new product or service and are passionate about bringing it to market.

While startups are often associated with technology and the Silicon Valley ecosystem, they can be found in a variety of industries

across the globe. Startups are typically small businesses, but some may grow to become large corporations.

The success of startups is important for the economy for a few reasons. First, startups are a major source of job creation. They are often responsible for creating new industries and new jobs. Second, startups are a major source of innovation. They often develop new products or services that solve problems in existing industries or create entirely new industries. Finally, startups are a major source of economic growth. They help to drive productivity gains and expand the economy.

The success of startups is also important for society more broadly. Startups often have a positive impact on society by solving problems and making people's lives better. They can also help to create new opportunities for people to pursue their dreams and ambitions.

More and more companies will emerge in the upcoming years with innovation and modernity, which can significantly alter the global economy. Startups can be launched from anywhere, and the nations with the greatest needs frequently offer the best prospects.

Startups flourish in developing nations, war-torn countries, and nations that are new to entrepreneurship. So entrepreneurship can boost the growth of a nation. Small companies like startups are crucial to economic expansion. This is because they create jobs, which leads to lower unemployment rates, which in turn signifies a more developed and better-functioning economy.

Besides this, startups also spur competition and encourage people to be more innovative and creative since new business owners have fresh ideas to share, which stimulates creativity and innovation.

Startups play the most crucial role in an economy. Most of us feel that startups grow in the developed economy due to adequate availability of resources. On the contrary, these ventures can start from anywhere as per market demand.

Startups are growth-oriented forces. It is necessary to find ways to encourage competition and support transformational entrepreneurs to prevent economic stagnation.

Although obtaining support at the federal level is crucial, the effort must be concentrated at the local level. Cities must support initiatives that promote entrepreneurship. Politicians and lawmakers cannot ignore entrepreneurs any longer since doing so would be detrimental to both local and national growth. Removing obstacles, fostering interaction, and assisting startups are just a handful of the ways civic leaders may give entrepreneurs a greater advantage.

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

Art & Culture

Involving Ethiopian/African artists in the fight to reclaim stolen artifacts

BY MULUGETA GUDETA

I have written a couple of articles about Lemn Sissay, the British-born Ethiopian poet and playwright who recently adopted to the stage Franz Kafka's classic novel called "The Metamorphosis" Today, I am writing about Ethiopian artists like Lemn living in the Diaspora who could and should join the fight for the rehabilitation of Ethiopia's historical artifacts that are numbered in the thousands and are actually languishing in various museums and art galleries in Europe while they should be returned to their rightful owners, that is to say Ethiopians and Africans in general.

Lemn has recently published an article in the Guardian on the same subject. What I am trying to do here is to elaborate on his ideas and add my perspectives on the subject that has always remained a concern to the people of Africa. The return of lost artifacts to Ethiopia or Africa is a burning issue because it is the most important issue whenever discussions are held on the need to rebuild African identity that can only be achieved on the basis historical legitimacy. Experience has shown that without its historical and cultural relics Africa and Africans will continue to feel the psychological trauma of losing one part of their body, a kind of trauma resulting in the dismemberment and loss of one crucial part of their collective identity.

In the Guardian article, Lemn Sissay underpinned the importance of the contribution African artists in the Diaspora could make in reclaiming the continent's historical and cultural heritages that were stolen during the colonial and post-colonial eras even before them. This is not a new call but since it comes from a prominent Ethiopian-British poet, it is bound to attract more attention than usual. Throughout the post-independence period, Africans in the Diaspora have been calling on governments and private cultural institution in Europe urging them to return the cultural and historical relics to Africans, their rightful owners.

Even here at home in Ethiopia, the intellectual community was always keen to uphold this cause in the belief that Africa without its relics is like an empty house without furniture to adorn it or like a man who has lost his soul or consciousness and lives in a catatonic state. As Lemn Sissay said in his Guardian article, "Part of the heart of the country, [Ethiopia] was looted and is being held in [European] museums." Sissay has sent a particular call to artists writers, singers and others. He said that, "The emergence of Ethiopians such as the Booker Prize nominated author Meaza Mengiste, the fashion model Liya Kebede, musicians such as Mulatu Astatke, and visual artists including Aida Muluneh and Julie Mehretu were forming a critical mass that was forcing museums and governments to reassess looted Ethiopian items in their collections, such as those taken after the



There are so many African philosophers, ethnologists, anthropologists and so on, living in the West or lecturing at prestigious universities. These elite intellectuals should come down to Africa and study their traditions and cultures and join the campaign for the repatriation of the looted African relics

Battle of Maqdala fought between British and Abyssinian forces in 1868."

Sissay's appeal is not of course the first to be made and there were many intellectuals here at home and in the Diaspora who had been championing the return of looted artifacts back to the country. That was the first generation of what we may call cultural activists who ceaselessly called upon European governments to take the matter seriously. Their efforts have of course produced mixed results. They were successful in securing items like part of the Aksum obelisk and others while on the other hand their campaigns were interrupted for no reason, the absence of consistency and cooperation under a permanent institution might have been the real factor behind for this partial success.

The task of repatriation of African cultural heritages has started a long time ago and is still progressing although slowly. This is because repatriation is being conducted on the basis of individual or group initiatives

and has seldom been conducted by the African Unity the single body with the relevant power and authority to conduct the work under its supervision.

And now a second generation of cultural activists seems to be knocking on the doors and making the same demands. It is to be noted that the first generation of activists was composed mainly of historians like the Pankhurst family and writers as well as the local intellectual community. The present generation which is yet on its way to emerging with the same demands is so far composed of artists and seems to have taken the initiatives.

This is of course a positive development that should be supported by government authorities and the cultural establishment here at home. The nature of support may be in the form of institutionalization of the efforts being undertaken or coordination in the form of information and prioritization of the campaign. First and foremost, this demands a major forum, whether online or live interactions, of all the new stakeholders to discuss the matter and achieve consensus around the major issues.

As Lemn said in his Guardian article, "As Ethiopia articulates itself through culture around the world, it becomes less easy to ignore the Battle of Maqdala. There were so many looted sacred objects, which means part of the heart of what it means to be Ethiopian is missing. As Ethiopia rises, so does the discussion about what was looted in 1868."

As The Guardian reported there have been calls for decades for the tablets or "tabots" to be repatriated to Ethiopia, and the country's culture minister requested their return while on a visit to the museum in 2019. Some "tabots" have already gone back such as one found in an Edinburgh church 23 years ago. It was also reported that in February, the Ethiopian government successfully halted the auction of a shield taken from Maqdala in the UK while Westminster Abbey agreed "in principle" to return to Ethiopia a sacred tablet it holds.

"Maqdala is not going away," Sissay was reported as saying, "More than ever, there is a much more sober conversation happening between the British and the Ethiopian authorities, and that is happening because of

the museums in Britain. These are the places where we are assessing what our role is in the world for the next 500 years."

Efforts for the repatriation of the looted relics should however be conducted not only by Ethiopians but also by other Africans in the Diaspora in coordination with their colleagues.

African countries have more or less lost various historical and cultural relics that are now found in various European capitals some of which are still regarded as war trophies or war booties. We need to reclaim what was ours and let the old colonial wound heal and the ongoing legal and illegal business with looted Africans treasures that is promoted with the full knowledge and sometimes the direct or indirect cooperation from European authorities although they are denying that such activities are taking place in their own turfs.

It would be up to African governments and African experts to search and find their lost treasures and bring them to international attention. The Egyptians have done a great deal of commendable work in this area. they are still continuing their search for their past that is nourishing and enriching their present. Ethiopia too has conducted similar efforts in the past although present day efforts are a bit sluggish. African anthropologists should priority to African hidden treasures and use their skills and knowledge to help the continent rediscover and bring its past civilizations to light so that it would be used for its spiritual and material development.

Intentional organizations should also help them financially and by providing trainings to young African cultural workers. There are so many African philosophers, ethnologists, anthropologists and so on, living in the West or lecturing at prestigious universities. These elite intellectuals should come down to Africa and study their traditions and cultures and join the campaign for the repatriation of the looted African relics. Local chapters for the promotion of the campaign can be organized in each African country and help the effort.

From any perspective we look at the issue, the new generation of cultural activists endorsed band their colleagues in the Diaspora could be doing a terrific job if they could institutionalize and coordinate their campaigns. This is a huge task that can no more be undertaken in isolation. Lemn Sissay's new initiative along this line is more than commendable and should be endorsed by others like him. A lot of time has so far been lost for lack of initiative and support. The foot-dragging must stop now.

This is obviously the time to reignite the passion for the return of Africa's historical and cultural relics that were looted and taken to Europe where they have been exposed to neglect and a second theft by the underground or online trade in the artifacts that is enriching the rich while impoverishing Africans by alienating the sources of their pride and identity.

Law & Politics

Addis Ababa: A city renovated to international metropolis

BY FITSUM GETACHEW

For years, Addis Ababa has been criticized for not being up to standard of its name and fame not only as the capital city of Ethiopia but also as Africa's. It is known that there are many international organizations and agencies in Addis making it a city of world diplomacy on the par of major reputed cities such as New York, Brussels and Geneva.

Many would agree that Ethiopia's outstanding position in the modern day African history makes it a significant point of reference in the continent's diplomatic and political affairs. And, its capital city must hence be equal to this huge reputation. Addis is a city founded relatively recent compared with other Ethiopian cities like Gondar or Harar. We know that it was chosen as the capital of Ethiopia under Emperor Menelik and Empress Taitu linking it with its strategic position and taken as a place endowed with abundant water coming from the hot springs of Finfine.

Back in 1879 E.C, nine years before the Battle of Adwa, was the date of its foundation but for decades it had not been developed or modernized as it should have even if it continued to be the center of industries, culture, and the most extensive economic hub of the nation.

With the establishment and advancement of the national air carrier - Ethiopian Airlines, it has become a major hub of international flights as millions of passengers passing through it. With the rapid growth of Ethiopia's diplomatic relations with multiple countries and being the seat for many international agencies, Addis has no doubt been serving lots of conferences and seminars.

At the same time, Addis has also been growing exponentially side by side with the growth of its population given that all the major institutions, academic, political, economic and medical agencies are situated in it. It hence has a major pulling force on the rural population of Ethiopia. People believe that they can easily get employment in Addis and many still continue to flock into the city. In the past few years, the construction industry has been booming and this, by itself, has become a major factor to be the source of vast employment.

Addis has also been expanding into the outskirts, and more inhabitants are moving to the hinterland cities and developing new centers outside the initially founded centers around Piassa and then Merkato, the major open market area. But, contrary to the major roads and constructions that have been carried out in the city to modernize

Addis Ababa will be a beautiful city that millions will like to travel to and find themselves in a healthy and comfortable place

them, the old and unplanned part of the city, with its congested neighborhoods, have always been a weak point and for many even an identity of the city.

In this respect, we can say Addis is a city of two different faces and two different epochs, the old and dilapidated houses and yet densely populated areas which recall its very first zones and the new luxurious quarters with modern buildings, sky rising edifices filled with new apartments and offices. The roads as well include huge and spacious highways most recently built with the old alleys and byroads that link the various neighborhoods of the city.

We know that there have been several master plans meant for the expansion and modernization of the city, but they had to be continuously updated or changed with the continuous expansion of the city and its population growth.

Today, Addis is considered as one of the

most important destinations of Africa for a number of reasons and it had to be compensated for what it lacked. Addis needs more spacious roads where its increasing traffic can smoothly be managed. It needs more comfortable pavements where pedestrians could walk with ease and above all more green areas and parks where residents could refresh themselves with a tranquil walk taking some fresh air.

The recent developments, in this sense, have been very successful and residents have been expressing their admiration and joy because the face of the city is being transformed. Old and dilapidated quarters are being replaced by new constructions and residents are being relocated to new areas where they can live more comfortably.

For the owners of small businesses which were crammed along the internal byroads in the congested areas, new shops are being distributed. Those who lost their residences due to the redevelopment of the area have been awarded new houses. This has been accorded huge gratification and gratitude to the Addis Ababa City Administration.

In the past few years, Addis Ababa has made tremendous progress in terms of availing green areas and parks something that it had once envied watching other cities. In fact, one of the major shortcomings of Addis was the scarcity of green areas. With the new Green Legacy Initiative launched a few years ago by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD), millions of tree seedlings have been planted. In the past few months, a campaign was launched by the city administration to adorn all the major roads of the city such as Churchill Road with grown up trees moved from other places. This has definitely given a new face to the city.

The various projects completed in Addis such as the Unity and Friendship Parks have added extra beauty to the city, and residents are visiting these places in their leisure time. There are also other new projects in the pipeline which the premier has pledged that they will be completed as per their schedule. For instance, the Chaka Project is one of them. The campaign of beautifying the city and making it a healthier place to live in and an attractive destination for tourists is continuing unabated, surprising even the most skeptical residents.

Adding the new Adwa Victory Memorial recently at the heart of the city has become a new glamour. The huge space in front of the Mayor's office was unused and fenced just idly at Piassa area. But, the new City Administration has drafted a huge project on the area based on the premier's idea

and made it one of the most important and attractive landmarks, not only in historical terms but also for its exquisite elegance with the fountain rising high.

Ethiopians have given due credit to the Battle of Adwa and to all those who were not given the deserved credit. Their history was somehow sidelined as footnotes though they did take decisive part in the battle. Their contribution, at this point, is well described and exhibited at the museum. It has brought the attention of the world that Adwa means a huge victory for Africans and for all oppressed peoples. There could not be any African who would not come to Addis and visit this memorial breathing fresh air of freedom, dignity and pride.

Following the construction of the Adwa Victory Memorial, Addis has also changed the major areas of its surroundings like Piassa and other neighborhoods in what is called the Corridor Development Project. Many old houses have to be removed and changed to new areas. New roads are being enlarged and decorated with flowers and green areas. Places where people can pass some time sitting by the side of the roads, taking a breath.

Finally, the city is now having more breathing areas and getting cleaner with the traffic jam as it is about to be reduced and managed; pedestrians will walk with ease and comfort on the streets.

People have been wondering and getting excited about the changes witnessed in the city - they used to know as old and outmoded. Although some may feel the nostalgia for their childhood neighborhoods, it was inevitable that the residents would be entitled to live in better, healthier, wider and more comfortable places with all the necessary infrastructures. As the city continues to expand and new arrangements are indispensable and hence inevitable, Addis, as any modern city, has to adapt to the new look. If we learn from the experience of other old cities that have been modernized gradually, Addis cannot be an exception dragging its feet behind. It is going to be the mirror of the country where every visitor would see us and make their remarks.

Many are struggling to believe how so much change is being undertaken in few years. But the city council has guaranteed that it cannot stop the modernization of the city until it commensurate with its denomination and reputation. Addis Ababa will be a beautiful city that millions will like to travel to and find themselves in a healthy and comfortable place. It will have more tourist sites, both new and old. Addis is hence enjoying its new face and its council should take all the deserved credit for this huge achievement.



Ethiopia's Community Health Extension System is a model for the rest of Africa and the world

Dr. Natalia Kanem

BY GRIMACHEW GASHAW

Today's guest is Dr. Natalia Kanem, the United Nations Under-Secretary General and Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). She had spent a few minutes with The Ethiopian Herald while she was in Addis Ababa to participate in the African Union Summit that was recently held.

During the interview, Natalia raised a range of issues, including the ongoing UNFPA advocacy efforts to implement the people-centered development for which the organization and its partner are mobilized and working together. One of those is the campaign for the acceleration of the reduction of maternal mortality in Africa led by the African Union and some other initiatives that are aiming to advance reproductive health, gender equality, and women's empowerment in individual countries. Have a nice read!

Would you briefly tell us about UNFPA's intervention areas in Ethiopia and Africa, please?

It is a privilege for me to be back on the soil of Ethiopia, where just last year UNFPA, which is the United Nations Sexual and Reproductive Health Agency, marked its 50 years of working in partnership with the people and government of this beautiful country in an ever-forward march towards a world of rights, dignity, and choices for all.

UNFPA is proud of the work that we do with the 10-year-old girl's insight. The focus of our work is putting women and girls at the center of development. And all across this country, our organization is partnering with the government, with civil society partners, and with the medical system to ensure comprehensive sexual and reproductive health services, including the availability of necessary health commodities, medicines, equipment, and protective commodities that are required. UNFPA today procures about one-third of Ethiopia's public contraceptive requirements. We support government efforts to address the gap in human resources for maternal health. And we are doing this through capacity-building programs like Integrated Emergency Surgery, Obstetrics, and Accelerated Midwifery. Midwives save lives, and we cooperate with the international midwifery system to try to double the number of midwives all around the world in 2030. Similarly, UNFPA is the leader in the United Nations system for population and development. We have supported population and housing censuses here in this country in 1984, 1994, and 2007. And we continue to work towards the fourth population and housing census and support the fifth demographic and health survey round.

East Africa is a volatile region. As a result, women and children are highly engaged in various traumatic situations. How UNFPA assist people in difficult scenarios?

Peace is the noble purpose of the United Nations, and it is also the wish of every woman in this world. Continuing conflicts in so many

parts all around the globe and the adverse effects of climate change are weakening systems, including here in Ethiopia, that have been put in place to protect women and girls. So despite interruptions or difficulties, UNFPA continues to provide reproductive and gender-based violence services to any woman or girl affected within our reach.

As well, we support safe spaces, safe houses, rehabilitation centers, and one-stop centers to provide comprehensive services to survivors of gender-based violence. And we support the National Alliance to End Child Marriage and Female Genital Mutilation, the goal there being by the year 2025. We call upon all parties to protect women and girls from sexual violence, any kind of physical assault, and the creation of an environment that allows women and girls to freely access services that they require.

UNFPA attended the 37th AU summit; what are the points you reflected there? On the 37th Ordinary Summit of the African Union, we engaged African leaders and stakeholders from all around the continent, including heads of state and government, ministers, the first ladies, African Union commissioners, and so many other multilateral partners, civil society, and youth leaders. Our focus is to welcome the leadership of the African Union, especially when it comes to encouraging the young people of this continent to change anything that is harmful to the social norms in Africa.

We are using every mechanism through the African Union Convention on Ending Violence Against Women Once Passed to

be an important step towards making sure there is peace in the home, peace in the communities, and that women and girls will no longer be subjected to gender based violence.

We are also very excited about the contributions in this 30th year of the commemoration of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD 30). This took place in Cairo, Egypt, here on the African continent, in 1994, and this year we celebrate ICPD 30. This 30th commemoration looks forward to the outcomes of the review of the Addis Ababa Declaration on Population and Development, now 10 years old, which feeds into discussions all around the global spectrum.

UNFPA will host a global dialogue on youth to be held in Cotonou, Benin, on the dates of April 4th to 5th of this year. This will be the first of three important discussions that are critical when we think about demographic diversity, new technology, and the rights and choices for women and girls and for all. We celebrate that on this continent. There has been a big reduction in deaths during pregnancy and childbirth.

Indeed, maternal mortality has been reduced by nearly a third across Africa in the last two decades. UNFPA recommits to supporting such efforts, including through CARMMA Plus 2021 through 2030, led by the African Union. It has been wonderful to be here and to meet directly with African leaders to listen to their requests for UNFPA support.

And this brings us to my last point, which

is our excitement to announce that in order to be closer to the communities we serve, UNFPA will integrate and strengthen our expertise, including relocating a portion of our New York headquarters-based technical and program staff to the continent of Africa in Nairobi, Kenya, next year (2025). We believe that, as part of a long-term strategy to ensure that UNFPA is future-fit, having a cadre of expert professionals located on the east coast of Africa will help us to operationalize far better many of our aims regarding timely support and real-time collaboration across Africa, yes, but also with Asia and the Pacific and with all regions of the world, including Latin America and the Caribbean.

I met with young leaders in Ethiopia, and I have been re-inspired to understand that even in a time when there is questioning and pushback against women's rights and dignity, we do have the confidence that the world will be in a better position to assure that every pregnancy is intended, every childbirth is safe, including in humanitarian and internally displaced IDP camps, and every young person's potential will be fulfilled.

What is the method that UNFPA utilizes in some parts of Ethiopia to reach the most vulnerable people?

In some parts of Ethiopia, where conflict and hunger are occurring, UNFPA has a decentralized approach. Some of our team members are working there. We have nine of them around the country, plus our hub in Ethiopia. And we pay very close attention to any reports of violence, abuse, rape, or GBV in general that affect women and girls. Our

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Ethiopia's Community...

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decentralized services are provided through local Ethiopian implementing partners.

This could be a midwife. The place where I visited is one of the partners that we work closely with across the country. We entrust the provision of services to people who are locally knowledgeable and who are culturally sensitive to what a woman who has been assaulted goes through. And some of the methodologies that I mentioned—the counseling, the safe spaces, and the ability to report and lay a claim for justice to follow any violation of a woman's or girl's rights—are part of what preoccupy us.

It's clear that peace is a precondition for being able to deliver development services. And part of the reason UNFPA focuses on the next generation is that we hope the young Ethiopian boy and man that is growing today will have an attitude towards respect and equality for women that is different from what has prevailed.

We also hope that young people will be active in ensuring peace, not to be recruited for conflict but to be recruited through their leadership to bring peace to their community and to be able to express their wish to be able to function in a society where peace prevails. Now, in working closely with the government to deliver these services, we prioritize, as UNFPA, three areas that we have been mandated for, which are to bring contraceptives, to work on death during pregnancy and childbirth, and to end gender-based violence. But everything we do is predicated on data and evidence.

Ethiopia is making preparations to conduct the 4th census. How is your organization backing the effort?

UNFPA stands ready to assist in deploying the next phase of the census. This is something that we are really having conversations with the government about on a minute-to-minute basis.

I think for planning purposes, it is very important to have data at hand. As you know, a census is typically an every-10-year proposition. So, the last census was undertaken in 2007. I believe that there are plans in place to be able to deploy that census. Secondly, in addition to the big census, there is also a health survey known as the Demographic Health Survey (DHS). We work very closely, in particular with the Ministry of Health and with the planning parts of government, to be able to assess how we are doing in terms of results that would reflect all manner of very important statistics, including those related to hunger.

Would you tell us about Campaign on Accelerated Reduction of Maternal Mortality in Africa (CARMMA)?

Right now, we are at the post-COVID point, which has affected health systems. We are also in a situation where, because of global war and conflict and local issues, everywhere we turn, the fact is that every two minutes a woman dies while she gives birth. This is a lot better than it was 20 years ago.

However, the causes of death during pregnancy and childbirth are 80% preventable. So in other words, every two minutes we see the needless loss of a mother, the loss of a sister and the loss of a daughter, and we have to ask why. UNFPA cooperates with the African Union's program, which is called CARMMA, and it stands for the



There is a lot of energy in this country. And indeed, you have pioneered certain types of arrangements. For example, the Community Health Extension System is a model, frankly, for the rest of Africa and the rest of the world

Campaign for the Accelerated Reduction of Maternal Mortality in Africa, CARMMA.

And this was a plan that was first laid in 2009; the CARMMA commitment was made; years have gone by, and the accelerated part of CARMMA has really not happened. So when you have almost 300,000 women dying during pregnancy and childbirth around the world every year, you have to ask who is most affected.

Of the bottom 40 countries for maternal mortality, 36 are in Africa. Of the bottom 20 countries for maternal mortality, 18 are in Africa. Afghanistan is the other one. So we have a lot of work to do for women to be supported.

First of all, when she is pregnant, why does the African woman die in childbirth much more than in any other region? So child marriage and everything else that goes along with it is not only a harmful practice; it is a lethal practice. For every woman that dies, there is a woman who has a fistula who is going to be embarrassed for the rest of her life if she doesn't receive surgery. This is a human dignity issue.

For every woman who dies, there are other women who have brain damage because of loss of oxygen, hemorrhage, and everything else that can happen to you. So, UNFPA is very confident that the husband who understands that his wife can die during

pregnancy and childbirth will want to support women to have the right nutrition and not to sit at home in labor for hours and days but to go to have a skilled midwife help her.

So, the CARMMA program, especially in the hands of UNFPA's partnership, is going to reinvigorate this understanding that we don't have to stand idly to mourn the death when two days earlier we could have done something to prevent it.

So the focus on prevention is indeed very welcome. There is a lot more than we can say about this, and we will be happy to share more statistics and data with you to support your important work in journalism and explain why this should be a priority for African heads of state. And this was part of our advocacy as I attended the African Union to help the commissioners and others lift this idea that we are going to stop women from dying during childbirth in Africa.

Only six years are left for SDGs to expire. What would be the priority areas of the UN next to that?

These 17 sustainable development goals were agreed upon by all of the 193 member states of the United Nations, including every African country. And the theme of the sustainable development goals is to leave no one behind. So again, we have to ask who is being left behind. If I am in my village, if I am in my mountain home, if I live on an island, as human beings, we all have equal rights.

The year 2030 is approaching rather quickly. Every time we have war and conflict, it derails our ability to work in unison and concert. Every time we see climate change and we do nothing about it, it means more drought, more floods, and more cyclones. It also means the lack of employment that young people worry about.

Africa is the youngest continent in the world. This could be a very precious asset for Africa if young people are educated, (education was the theme of the African Union Summit this year) and if young people are able to see their bright future right here on the continent, rather than having to exit. So here again, the sustainable development goals speak to hunger, they speak to education,

they speak to gender equality, they speak to health and, very importantly, to peace and international cooperation.

Our Secretary General, Antonio Guterres, has announced a summit of the future to take place during the time of the United Nations General Assembly in New York in September. And during that summit of the future, the question of rescuing the sustainable development goals will be the top priority.

Pertaining to maternal health, what sort of changes have you seen in Ethiopia?

Across Ethiopia, as I mentioned, we have worked for 50 years, embedding ourselves in the understanding that there is a lot of wisdom in this country. There is a lot of energy in this country. And indeed, you have pioneered certain types of arrangements. For example, the Community Health Extension System is a model, frankly, for the rest of Africa and the rest of the world.

In our particular case, the goals of UNFPA in Ethiopia are to assure that, for voluntary contraception, women are able to space their children according to their judgment. This is a big operation, as you have a big country. You have a country that's also increasing in population at a very rapid rate.

You are one of the top five countries in the world in terms of accelerating population growth. So, this has some dynamics where, again, young people have to be a focus for us all. And in the case of UNFPA, it is actually young women, because the empowerment of women is part of development.

The second arena in which we work is ending death during childbirth. This actually goes along with ending early marriage, ending FGM, and so much else. And here, men have to play a role because the father of the family sets the expectations for the girl. Is she going to complete her education or not? Will she be protected from child marriage or not? And so we feel it is very important to have male involvement.

Some of the African heads of state have started an initiative known as Positive Masculinities so that men will encourage each other to assure that women are respected and protected. On the question of gender-based violence, I would say this is one of the biggest challenges that we have.

As I travel the world, everywhere I go, one of the collateral damages of conflict is upheaval in the family. People displaced while they are on the move, especially women and girls, are vulnerable to sexual abuse, trafficking, kidnapping, and so much else. Rape, sadly, is a mindset that has to change. And a lot of our work is to heal after the fact, to help with psychological counseling, and to heal the physical wounds. However, we have to work on the prevention side much more vigorously as well.

This is not normal. It is not natural. So, that is why we see these types of violations of the human rights of women and girls in every single instance and everywhere in the world. So, here, we need conversations not just at the global level but in every school, in every home, and in every religious community.

We need to start discussing these difficult issues of why women and girls are subjected to the horrors and the life-damaging influence of sexual assault during conflict or at any other time.

Thank you very much!

It is much appreciated!

Society

Inclusive national dialogue for sustainable peace

BY MENGISTEAB TESHOME

It is clear that nation building is a process of people who share a common vision trying to build a system that could help them address common social and economic as well as political interests accordingly.

For several years the issue of nation building has been the subject throughout the world and some countries that effectively applied properly in joint discussion with the masses are able to realize positive results whereas others are seen taking war as an alternative route to peace which is totally far from the reality.

Countries around the world established a national dialogue commission to mend the relation between the various groups. Nations that have conducted productive national dialogue are able to ensure sustainable peace and develop a working system that acknowledges the interest of their citizens. Ethiopia's National Dialogue Commission which was established three years ago is a good example for this claim for it has taken into consideration the needs of various members of the society.

The Commission is aggressively working to ensure sustainable peace in Ethiopia. As a means to realize its goals the Commission is providing an opportunity to various sectors of the society to reflect their view and contribute their share in the peace process. Residents of Addis Ababa are among these sections of the societies that are actively engaged in the national dialogue. And most of the residents are reflecting their view about the constructive role of the dialogue to ensure sustainable peace.

In an exclusive interview with *The Ethiopian Herald* Fiseha Yirdaw, who is a resident of Addis Ababa, said that the national dialogue is a golden opportunity that the nation should not miss, because the nation has missed a number of golden opportunities that should be applied. "Implementing productive national dialogue is helpful in the nation building process and including various sections of the society in the process will reveal a positive result in the future."

According to him, individuals as well as groups engaged in armed conflict should come to a round table discussion which is the best and the right way to avoid any form of conflict and sustain peace. Ensuring peace through arm struggle has not worked. The best way to ensure sustainable peace and development is through implementing productive dialogue.

"I am well aware of the fact that each nation and nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia have several traditional mechanisms they had been using to avoid conflict. Thus, applying the traditional as well as modern means of averting conflict has a great contribution to address rifts and conflicts. The social capital of each ethnic group



could be instrumental in supporting the effort of the Commission."

Fiseha said that the Commission should keep on working in translating the National Dialogue plan to the ground and realize sustainable peace in all parts of Ethiopia. All stakeholders and the development partners should support both technically and financially.

Responding to the role of the media he said that all media houses should give due attention and deliver information in professional fashion. The media houses should refrain from providing unbalanced and biased information that may directly or indirectly serve as a weapon to stir peace. It is clear that Ethiopia is a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural society, and journalists are expected to be professional and unbiased.

He also commented that the national dialogue deserves the attention of all stakeholders. "The media houses should develop an agenda that could inspire the public and question the operation of the national dialogue. Because the media has a power in building informed society that could decide on various issues based on rational thinking that could be important in building a peaceful society."

It is to be recalled that Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission (ENDC) Chief Commissioner Professor, Mesfin Araya, told the media that the Commission is in the final stages of identifying participants in ten states.

The commission is also in the final stage of selecting woreda representatives who

will be involved in the agenda collection process within the aforementioned period.

The Commissioner further stated that the agenda collection will be implemented in the areas where the primary activities are fully completed. "The commission is ready to conduct agenda collection progress in Addis Ababa, Gambella, Benishangul-Gumuz, Sidama, Harar, and Dire Dawa. Representatives drawn from each woreda are expected to gather and present worthy ideas to the commission," he said.

Accordingly, in April 2024, the Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission (ENDC) announced that over 130,000 citizens have been involved in agenda collection, participants' identification, and other preliminary activities.

Recently, ENDC Spokesperson, Tibebe Tadesse also informed the media that the Commission has been carrying out various activities to identify dialogue participants and map about 1,300 districts across the country to ensure the process is inclusive and participatory.

Tibebe also mentioned that participants' identification has been ongoing in 940 districts across the country, with the commission finalizing these activities in 850 districts. Participants' identification will take place in the remaining districts in the coming weeks.

"Out of the 130,000 citizens who participated in the preliminary activities, more than 14,000 have been selected to take part in the agenda collection for the final dialogue. The representatives are drawn from different states and segments of society, excluding Addis Ababa, federal institutions, and Diaspora communities."

The spokesperson further highlighted that the commission has completed the identification of representatives who will participate in the final dialogue in Afar, Benishangul Gumuz, Gambella, Harari, Sidama, South Western Ethiopia, South and Central Ethiopia states, as well as in Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa city administrations.

Participants' identification is ongoing in Somali and Oromia states, and after completing these activities, the commission will have 70-75% of the total representatives required for the final dialogue. The remaining 25 to 30% will be filled through participants' identification and agenda collection activities in Amhara and Tigray states, with preparations underway for this purpose.

Currently, the commission has finalized the preparations to launch the agenda input collection from public forums. In this regard, the state-level agenda collection forum is expected to take an average of eight to ten days, requiring preparations in terms of labor force, logistics, security, and other areas, he remarked.

"Implementing productive national dialogue is helpful in the nation building process and including various sections of the society in the process will reveal a positive result in the future"

Verbatim and Caption

Ethiopia investing extensively AI development: DPM Temesgen



Ethiopia has been extensively working on the development of artificial intelligence (AI) and technology transfer. AI is crucial to address the challenges that African countries including Ethiopia are facing. Hence, developing AI technologies will help to realize digital transformation. Considering the role of AI, Ethiopia gives due focus on the development of AI and technology transfer and Desta Robot is the outcome of this effort.

Temesgen Tiruneh, deputy Prime Minister said while attending Robot Desta musical performance with the eminent musical Mulatu Astatke.

Ethiopia to complete issuance of Digital ID for Refugees within a year: RRS

Ethiopia is working to conclude issuance of digital identification (Digital ID) to over 1.1 million refugees within a year. The initiative aims to streamline government and private services for the refugees in Ethiopia. The new refugee ID would allow refugees to access key services in Ethiopia. It empowers refugees to participate in Ethiopian society, fostering both social and economic benefits.

Biruhesfa Mulugeta, Deputy Director-General, Refugees and Returnees Service (RRS)



Verbatim and Caption

Startup Ethiopia exhibition showcases aspiration, innovation: PM Abiy



The startup Ethiopia exhibition at the Science Museum showcases the aspirations, ingenuity, and innovation of participants in the ecosystem. I highly recommend everyone to visit the exhibition and interact with the exhibitors.

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) said after visiting “Startup Ethiopia” Exhibition

The general public shows its support to maintain the national reform: Deputy PM

In connection with the 6th year of the National Reform, the general public across the country organized rallies to show its support to the national reform. Ensuring peace and security, strengthening the journey to prosperity, ensuring good governance and asks the government to strengthen its role maintaining these basic issues during the rallies.

The public shows its commitment to maintain peace, development, democracy, justice and the freedom to self-administration which are the outcomes of the reform. The government listen the voices of the people and will act accordingly to ensure the public’s demands.

Temesgen Tiruneh, Deputy Prime Minister said acknowledging the public’s support to the national reform

Mayor Adanech kicks off Adwa Victory Memorial, Adwa Plazas’ bus terminal services

Mayor Adanech Abiebie

BY DIRRIBA TESHOME

Addis Ababa City Administration Mayor Adanech Abiebie said Adwa Victory Memorial Bus Terminal and Adwa Plazas is open for the public use as of yesterday.

“On top of protecting the terminal’s customers from the sun and rain, the Adwa Victory Memorial Bus Terminal is equipped with a security camera to ensure the safety of the passengers and includes a shelter,” the mayor noted.

She also stated that the Adwa Plazas

points out how much the people of Addis Ababa want common facilities and entertainment besides demonstrating public interest.

“It is a great pleasure to see the low-income residents of our city, who cannot afford to pay for entry to the recreational

facilities, relax and receive services in such communal facilities;” she felt it adding: “Realizing the high demand of our people for corridor development, we are working to include many plazas, entertainment, bus and taxi terminals and parking lots.”