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Ethiopia upholding integrated energy sources for reliable electrification

- Plans to provide 100% electricity from renewable sources by 2030

BY ASHENAFI ANIMUT

ADDISABABA- Ethiopia aims to reach 100% electricity access to 20 million households from various renewable energy sources by 2030, Ministry of Water and Energy (MoWE)

announced.

MoWE State Minister Eng. Sultan Walle (PhD) made the above remark recently while the Ministry validates the six-year energy development strategy which aims to sustain

the country's renewable energy generation.

Despite its immense renewable and clean energy resources potential, he noted that over 34 million people in the country are still in

See Ethiopia upholding .. page 3



Yohannes Benti (PhD)

Teachers Association extends unwavering support to Nat'l Dialogue

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

ADDIS ABABA-Ethiopian Teachers Association said it is providing continuous support for the success of the Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission's (ENDC)

See Teachers Association .. page 3

Authority mobilizes states in fighting pollution

BY YESUF ENDRIS

ADDIS ABABA- In a revolutionary move to combat the growing environmental crisis, the Ethiopian Environment Protection Authority (EPA) launched a six-month comprehensive anti-pollution campaign in South West Ethiopia and Dire Dawa.

Speaking at the launching ceremony of the campaign in Dire Dawa, EPA Deputy Director General Frenesh Mekuria said the campaign aims to address pressing environmental pollution while fostering sustainable development practices nationwide.

The campaign, which unites different states, is now gaining significant attention and support and a unified commitment to fight different forms of pollution including plastic pollution, sound pollution, and water pollution is critically needed, she added.

According to Frenesh, a significant milestone in this endeavor is the launch of the six-month campaign. The campaign signifies a proactive approach towards tackling



pollution and it raises the public awareness about the urgent need for environmental stewardship.

The deputy director general further commended local administrations and experts' role to expand Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's project of expanding agro-forestry- planting as a means to tackle

environmental degradation. Also, the green initiative is making a shift in Ethiopia's approach to environmental conservation, and showcased proactive measures' importance.

Dire Dawa's Environment, Forestry and

See Authority mobilizes ... Page 3

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Fairtrade Africa promoting regional cooperation on coffee market

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

ADDIS ABABA - Fairtrade Africa stated that it is strengthening cooperation between Eastern and Central Africa regions and facilitating peer learning on coffee production and marketing.

Approached by *The Ethiopian Herald* Fairtrade Africa Project Manager Kelvin Muhia said that efforts are being exerted to promote Eastern and Central African nations coffee producers to get access to global market through Golden Cup Competition that takes place each year.

He added that the trading of Ethiopian coffee in Kenya or Kenyan coffee in Rwanda is an important business doing to improve the regional coffee market which promotes peer learning and regional collaboration.

For instance, Kenya can learn from Ethiopia's coffee production practices and Rwanda can learn

See Fairtrade Africa ... page 3

News

Repatriated citizens praise gov't rescue operations

BY MESERETE BEHAILU

ADDIS ABABA- Some Ethiopians repatriated from Saudi Arabia said they were exposed to inhuman treatment and abuse, praised the government's efforts to rescue citizens who are in difficult situations in the Kingdom.

Approached by the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA), two repatriated citizens namely Neima Ahmed and Abdurrahman Kemal bitterly recalled the atrocities they faced in the Kingdom. They advised fellow citizens to take the legal channel to live and work abroad.

Neima was repatriated to home with her two children after spending 10 months in Saudi Arabia's brutal prisons. She said, "Spending time in prison is difficult for everyone, especially for women and children, as access to food and other amenities is challenging."

She extended gratitude to the government to begin the repatriation process because numerous Ethiopian citizens have been



Neima Ahmed

facing such challenges and required active response to be released from prisons.

Neima also stated that citizens have been spending 200,000 and 300,000 Birr for illegal brokers to cross Saudi Arabia's borders in search of jobs and better life. However, most of the migrants do not have



Abdurrahman Kemal

access to jobs, rather they are thrown to jails and they become mentally ill.

She advised citizens to use the legal channel when they want to travel abroad in the search of jobs that would protect their rights and benefits from physical and psychological assaults.

Supporting the above rationale, Abdurrahman Kemal, 34, who is from Babilie town of the Oromia State said that undocumented citizens are dangerously crossing the Yemen-Saudi Arabia border to arrive in the Kingdom and some of them are losing their lives due to hostile climate and lack of food and drinks as well as fatigue while others are thrown to jails.

"I spent 14 months in Asir, Saudi Arabia's notorious prison and they were feeding once a day and there was no medical service and they forced us to live without sanitation and toilet as well as basic infrastructure to live in."

Abdurrahman further highlighted that Ethiopia's diplomatic mission to Saudi Arabia needs to exert a lot of work, especially helping citizens who are in difficulty to return to their home country and conduct a meticulous negotiation with the Kingdom's officials. "I appreciate the Ethiopian government for taking us out of that misery and taking care of us though a lot remains to be done in this regard."



Japan bestows 12 vehicles to ENDC

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

ADDIS ABABA—The government of Japan handed over 12 vehicles and 100 computers to Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission (ENDC).

As to the statement sent to *The Ethiopian Herald*, the Embassy of Japan in Ethiopia stated that this support covered procurement of 12 vehicles for through UNDP at ENDC premises yesterday.

During handover ceremony Japan Ambassador to Ethiopia, Hironori Shibata stated that the handing over ceremony has shown the strong ties between Ethiopia and Japan through supporting National Dialogue process the latter to create peace in Ethiopia.

"Japan is always a strong supporter to the people and the government of Ethiopia, and work together for recovering the beautiful and peaceful nation. Since I arrived in

Ethiopia, I have reaffirmed that National Dialogue is one of the key activities for realizing eternal peace in Ethiopia," he added.

In addition to such mobility and equipment, this fund will also support the public-relations materials of National Dialogue to spread the key information of National Dialogue to the people all over the nation, according to the statement.

Speaking at the handover ceremony, ENDC Chief Commissioner Prof. Mesfin Araya thanked the Japan government for its longstanding relationship and commitment to support Ethiopia.

The vehicles that have been donated by Japan will be fully utilized in the field works of the commission, Mesfin said.

Japan will enhance supports on such the critical peace building activities for the people of Ethiopia.

Various projects were already granted over 40 million USD in the conflict affected areas implemented by Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and UN agencies after Pretoria agreement in November 2022.

These 12 vehicles and other equipment expand and improve the capacity of ENDC's services enabling accelerate practicing National Dialogue process, embassy added.

The Government of Japan has continuously supported Ethiopia in the various sectors for social development, peace and stabilization of the country for over 50 years, since 1970's.

In May 2023, Japan granted 3 million USD in collaboration with UNDP to enable ENDC a more efficient and credible operation for progressing National Dialogue.

Addis licenses 1,921 investors with 9 bln Birr capital

• 101 projects commence operation

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

ADDIS ABABA – Addis Ababa Investment Commission has issued licenses to investors with a combined capital of 9 billion Birr during the past nine months.

Approached by the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA), Commission Plan and Budget Monitoring Director Enatalem Tamene said that over the past nine months, the commission has licensed 1,921 investors with a total capital of 9 billion Birr achieving 76% of its plan.

During the stated period, the Commission enabled the transformation of some 394 projects from preparation to implementation phase and some 101 projects commenced operation, she noted.

In terms of capital, the Agency has been working to register a combined capital of 5.72 billion Birr and registered 9 billion Birr investment capital which is 157% of the plan in the aforementioned period, according to Enatalem.

The Commission also generated 18.34 million Birr revenue from licensing and related services, she said.

Accordingly, it has created permanent and temporary job opportunities for 11,354 citizens of the planned 8244 jobs, she expressed.

Furthermore, as part of its effort to modernize investment license and related services delivery, it launched the pilot project of online service delivery, the Director noted.

News

Ethio-Djibouti Railway earns 2.84 bln Birr in nine-month

BY ESSEYE MENGISTE

ADDIS ABABA- The Ethio-Djibouti Railway Share Company (EDRSC) stated that it has earned 2.84 billion birr from railway services over the past nine months.

EDRSC Chief Corporate Strategy Officer Aminu Juhar told the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA), the Company planned to collect 3.7 billion Birr providing services in the fiscal year and managed to collect 2.84 billion Birr in nine months.

He stated that when compared to the same period last year, the earned income has increased by 67 million Birr.

He pointed out that the Company planned to increase its capacity of transporting passengers to 155,000 during nine months and transported 148,664 passengers; the performance is 95.9 percent.

Over the nine months, 2.01 million tons of incoming and outgoing cargos were supposed to be but, 1.442 million tons of cargos have been transported; this covers 71.6 percent of the plan. The amount of cargo transported in the nine months showed a seven percent decrease compared to the same period last year, he said.

As to him, the amount of cargo decreased



due to equipment failures in railway system, disruption of cargo handling cranes, security problems in the Red Sea, and the floods in the Port of Djibouti, operations were suspended for a few days.

Security and peace problems, theft and damage, accidents to people and animals and power outages are among the challenges the Share Company faced over the last nine months. The Company is working closely with the relevant stakeholders to solve the

problems, he stated.

The Ethio-Djibouti Railway Transport Share Company has planned to improve the loading and unloading efficiency of railways by 7.5 percent in the last nine months, he said.

Aminu further said that the performance of the service reform is being studied and the results will be announced when it is identified

Ethiopia upholding integrated energy...

need of electricity and also over 90 million people lack clean cooking fuels.

He further emphasized that the government is intensely working to increase the current 5.3 GW to 17 GW in 2030 through diversifying the renewable energy mixed with wind, solar, geothermal and building hydropower dams including Abbay Dam.

The country has planned to reach 100% electricity access from renewable energy sources to benefit about 20 million households from clean cooking fuels, he added.

He said: "Trickling down our policy intervention, the energy sector plans to contribute less than 4% of the total carbon emissions in the country in the time frame stated above and become one of the lowest

carbon emitters globally."

As to him, among energy-consuming sectors, the transport sector will also reduce the demand for petroleum through leapfrogging to green mobility solutions including e-mobility, railways, and non-motorized transport.

Moreover, he elaborated that the ministry has recently established Public-Private Partnership (PPP) proclamation and Regulation to transform national markets and accelerate investments for an effective net-zero, climate resilient development.

In the same vein, Sultan stated that the government has prepared a power sector reform roadmap to include further restructuring and liberalization of the wholesale and retail electricity markets and it has also employed a new investment law

to encourage foreign direct investment in the power and other sectors.

"Hydropower is currently the highest electricity contributor in the country, such reliance on large-scale hydro has its own drawbacks such as threats of natural and manmade disasters," he said.

It is, therefore, highly significant to build a variety of generation mix by properly utilizing other energy potentials such as wind, geothermal, small-scale hydro and solar energy to ensure reliability, cost reduction and security of supply and thrive its energy foreseeable future, Sultan pinpointed.

As to him, access to modern energy would be also important towards alleviating poverty, stimulating economic development, promoting gender equality, improving living standards, among many others.

Authority...

Climate Change Head Abdu Mohammed for his part stated that the city administration is prioritizing recycling activities to minimize plastic pollution. "Plastics can take up to 500 years to decompose and Dire Dawa is now the second most victim Ethiopian city of plastic pollution. So, we will shift to recycling plastics."

South West Ethiopia State also joined the campaign last Saturday.

Head of the state Environmental Protection and Climate Change office AsratGebremriam, who mentioned environmental pollution as a countrywide challenge, highlighted the need to exert collective efforts and share responsibility and uphold readiness to implement the campaign.

Fairtrade Africa...

from Ugandan coffee cooperatives' experiences to expand success stories and build a strong bloc comprised of the Eastern and Central African regions.

He mentioned that Fairtrade Africa supports coffee producers in Eastern, Central Africa regions that include Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda and Democratic Republic of Congo.

According to the Project Manager, the movement is implementing a project called "Sustainable Chain of Ethiopian coffee" to promote and change Ethiopian coffee strategy to make sound globally. "We have initiatives to support value addition of Ethiopia coffee to encourage local consumption."

Golden Cup Competition is an avenue for creating market access to Fairtrade certified coffee in Ethiopia as well as to promote African coffee quality and synthesizes by bringing producers together, he noted.

"We want to grow this into higher level because the more Fairtrade Africa coffee we sell, the more we impact the livelihood of our farmers and goal of Fairtrade is to improve the livelihoods of coffee producing farmers in the aforesaid nations,

Fairtrade Africa is envisioned to see the growing of fair trade sells thereby it is currently selling some 700,000 MT of coffee originally from Africa as fair trade certified and secured 5.3 million euro in premium.

It also organized Golden Cup Competition in Kenya, Rwanda and other African nations to provide support African coffee farmers, he said.

Teachers Association extends...

preliminary activities through identifying education sector participants in the National Dialogue.

Association President Yohannes Benti (PhD) told the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that they have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the ENDC in a bid to expedite participation in the National Dialogue and to work together in different areas.

The association is undertaking different activities to ensure the inclusiveness and

fairness of participants' identification process at district level. Similarly, the association's branch offices at district level have been highly engaged in mobilizing the education community to the National Dialogue participation, he added.

"The experience of different countries showcased the best outcomes of national dialogues. In this regard, we believe that the forthcoming National Dialogue would play a paramount role in resolving Ethiopia's age-long and contentious challenges and that is why we are closely working with the

commission."

Yohannes (PhD) also stated that the association has held fruitful discussions with the ENDC leadership to identify the areas where the commission seeks support and collaboration. Education is amongst the primary sectors that hugely affected by instability and conflicts and not only the schools become damaged but both teachers and students' necessary documents usually get lost due to chaos.

"Given education is mind work; it needs stable and peaceful environment," he

noted, mentioning the association's different undertakings with ENDC, media institutions, and other relevant bodies.

Though different countries have carried out national dialogues; few countries did not succeed due to their failure to make the process participatory and inclusive.

In light of the above, the president emphasized citizens' irreplaceable role for the success of the National Dialogue and called on everyone to understand the value of their involvement in the process.

Opinion

Geopolitical, economic advantages of access to the sea

BY GETACHEW MINAS

Access to the sea is a vital and essential geopolitical advantage for nations. It offers them economic, social, and strategic benefits. It is of significant importance for trade, commerce and coastal access. It allows nations to engage in maritime trade, facilitating the exchange of goods and services with other countries. In this process, ports become essential for global trade networks, boosting economic growth and prosperity.

Moreover, sea routes provide efficient and effective means of transportation for goods and people over long distances. This is especially important for bulky or perishable goods that are more efficiently transported by sea rather than land. Also coastal regions offer access to valuable natural resources such as fish, oil, and minerals. Exploiting these resources can contribute to economic development and energy security. It also provides access to the sea for countries that are landlocked like Ethiopia. Control over coastal areas and sea routes are vital for national security and defense for all countries using the portal services.

Nations with access to the sea can project power, deploy naval forces, and protect maritime trade routes, enhancing their strategic position. Access to the sea is one of the preconditions for exercising power using naval forces. Landlocked countries are denied of this strategic power unless they make arrangements with those friendly countries that have natural access to the sea. This and other defense strategies may lead to the creation of naval forces along the sea, particularly along the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden and Somalia's coastline. But, this requires peaceful and economic cooperation with neighboring countries of Ethiopia.

The coastal areas provide opportunities for recreational activities and attract tourists. Along the coasts, it is possible to provide beach activities and water sports. It is also attractive, gorgeous and striking for marine wildlife viewing. This allows Ethiopian enterprises engaged in touristic activities to earn foreign exchange and benefits to the local economies. This enhances quality of life of the people engaged in maritime activities.

Maritime trade routes facilitated cultural exchange and the spread of ideas among the people engaged in shipping activities. They may also come across religious activities, sharing common factors. They may be using varieties of languages along coastal areas. It is also possible to come across technologies between Ethiopia's civilizations and cultures along the borders.

Coastal regions often develop rich cultural diversity due to interactions with foreign traders and travelers.

Coastal ecosystems, coral reefs and estuaries provide valuable services to visitors and tourists. Ethiopians may cooperate with peoples of neighboring countries in the protection of maritime life and shoreline habitat from erosion and storms. It is, therefore, useful to preserve these tourist attractions as sources of foreign exchange. Given these advantages, access to the sea has been a driving force in the development and prosperity of coastal nations throughout history. However, it also brings challenges such as maritime disputes, environmental degradation, and vulnerability to sea-level rise and natural disasters. Therefore, responsible "stewardship of coastal and marine resources" is essential for sustainable development, peace and security.

Access to the sea has been vital for many countries without which they find it difficult to conduct their economic activities. They require the right of entry and exit for the purpose of trade, transportation or recreation. Countries, such as Ethiopia, that are landlocked also need access to the sea for import and export of goods and services. What is produced within these countries has to be exported passing through sea ports. This is also true for imports.

There is no country in the world that is self-sufficient and surviving without trading with the rest of other countries, near and far. A country may not need sea ports only when it is trading with neighboring countries that share its borders. However, trading with other countries requires access to the sea. For those countries bordering the seas, their coastal regions provide them with economic opportunities. They may enjoy their fishing rights along their borders. These natural resources create opportunities for entrepreneurs engaged in canning of sea food for the market. These economic opportunities, however, could not be enjoyed by landlocked countries such as Ethiopia.

Another economic opportunity that is enjoyed by countries having access to the sea is shipping. Landlocked countries could have shipping enterprises that are operating along the seas bordering neighboring countries. Ethiopia has its shipping enterprise that is engaged in the export of goods and services originating from the country. Similarly, its shipping lines are engaged in the import of goods and services that originate from abroad. The export items are mainly coffee, Chat, flowers, livestock and livestock products and meat, gemstones, etc. Its imports are wheat, refined petroleum, vaccines and

medicines, palm oil, fertilizers, etc.

Apart from import and export of goods and services, the shipping lines are engaged in serving passengers that visit Ethiopia as tourists. These tourists come from different parts of the world to visit historical sites and natural attractions. Ethiopia may also engage in offshore resource extraction, which requires access to the sea in cooperation with neighboring countries.

Access to the sea is of strategic importance for national defense and security in Ethiopia. Experts have shown that throughout history, control over coastal areas and ports has often been contested. It has led to confrontations which ended up in serious conflicts. These conflicts and skirmishes used to be settled through negotiations between concerned countries.

As a landlocked country, access to the sea is particularly significant for Ethiopia. It provides a gateway to global markets. Its access to international trade is mainly facilitated through seaports of the neighboring countries. Ethiopia often relied on agreements with neighboring coastal states. Other countries having the same challenges as Ethiopia have used the strategy of being members in regional organizations to secure access to maritime routes. Currently, maintaining open and secure access to the sea is important for global trade and interconnectedness of countries.

International maritime laws and agreements, such as the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), regulate activities in maritime zones. They have the objective of ensuring freedom of navigation and the peaceful use of the seas for all nations. This UN Convention is a comprehensive international treaty that governs the use of the world's oceans. It has been adopted in 1982 and entered into force in 1994.

UNCLOS establishes a legal framework for the management and conservation of marine resources. It ensures the protection of the marine environment and the regulation of maritime activities globally. Its key provisions include territorial sea that is extending up to 12 nautical miles (about 22 kilometers) from a baseline of a coastal state. Within this zone, "coastal states have sovereignty over the airspace, seabed, and subsoil." The Law of the Sea determined that coastal states have exclusive rights over the exploration and exploitation of natural resources within an Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). This area extends up to 200 nautical miles (about 370 kilometers) from the baseline.

"Other states" have the freedom of navigation in the EEZ as well as over-flight

in the same area. The law also provides for coastal states their sovereign rights to explore natural resources. They also have the right to exploit natural resources on the continental shelf beyond their EEZ. This, however, has to be part of the natural continuation of their land territory. The law also guarantees the freedom of navigation for all states, including Ethiopia. They may enjoy the high seas and other maritime zones, such as the territorial sea and the EEZ.

The law establishes conservation and management of living resources. The UNCLOS establishes principles, codes, standards, duties, and measures for the conservation of resources. It also guarantees sustainable management of marine living resources, such as fish stocks. These acts require protection of the marine environment. The law defines and sets out obligations for states to prevent, reduce, and control marine pollution. It is, therefore, necessary to protect and preserve the marine environment. Those countries that are landlocked are entitled to use the maritime services for the purpose of trading.

UNCLOS has been ratified by a large majority of the countries of the world. These include major maritime powers. It also provides a crucial framework for resolving disputes related to maritime issues. These issues are mainly related to boundaries along the sea. It also involves maritime resource management without creating any disputes among neighboring countries. It pays attentions to environmental protection without which maritime resources would be in danger of extinction. However, the law is subject to misinterpretation.

There are ongoing debates concerning the interpretation of the law regarding claims on natural resources. There are also serious challenges regarding the implementation of the law as new issues arise. There are coastal areas that are subjected to overlapping maritime claims. Some countries claim an extended border that leads to clashes among neighboring countries over the use of maritime resources. Some countries have been exploiting the maritime resources that are beyond their borders. The law of the sea has been subjected to revision based on the demands of countries on the proper use of resources. In view of the benefits of maritime resources, Ethiopia has to be a beneficiary of such endowment with access to the seas.

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

Editorial

A deserved member to empower women

Possible solutions are now continentally and globally framed as lack of access to education and employment, gender-based violence, poverty and the likes have severely been baffling women in developing countries in particular and throughout the universe in general.

Unequivocally, women's empowerment can have a range of positive impacts on their lives, including improved economic opportunities, increased political participation, and greater gender equality.

Cognizant of the fact that women empowerment is a decisive step to help women breathe a sigh of relief; Ethiopia has invested in empowering women and girls across all of its programs by promoting equal access to education, health, and economic opportunities. Especially these days, women's empowerment in Ethiopia has been a key issue since they constitute over half percentage share of the entire national population.

As learnt from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the country is elected to be a member of UN Commission on the Status of Women for a four-year term of office beginning at the first meeting of the Commission's seventieth session in 2025. In so doing, the assignment given to the nation now would help create opportunities for more equitable participation in society for females across and on the globe.

Ethiopia's experience regarding women empowerment would be of instrumental in fostering the effort geared towards earning benefits out of the invaluable forums for shaping policies, sharing insights, and charting pathways toward gender parity and inclusivity.

The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) has elected Ethiopia to serve as a member for a four-year term.

Since Ethiopia's relentless effort and positive stride toward gender equality and empowerment has been an exemplary one, Ethiopia will harness its tested experience in contributing its modest share to the Commission. The term is set to commence at the inaugural meeting of the Commission's seventieth session in 2025 and will extend until the conclusion of its seventy-third session in 2029.

It is well known that in 1946 the Commission on the Status of Women was established to promote the advancement of women throughout the world. True, the Commission continues to provide unique opportunities for exchange of ideas, experiences, good practices and lessons-learned to enhance implementation of commitments at national level, through interactive expert panels on the themes under consideration and roundtables for high-level representatives attending the annual sessions.

Beside, Ethiopia has so far become at the forefront in advocating for the rights and advancement of women nationally, regionally and even internationally as it has shown remarkable achievement in due course of empowering women. Ethiopia has greater number of women parliamentarians, the number at one time even rose to 50%, it incorporates women in line ministries, and provides women with other senior positions. This is the clear manifestation of country's commitment to well empower women. Ethiopia's dedication would foster a platform for the exchange of ideas, experiences, and best practices and aimed at bolstering the implementation of commitments at national, regional, continental and global level.

Unequivocally, Ethiopia is prettily working to further enhance women's empowerment as the process of enabling women to have greater control over their lives and to be able to make their own decisions is the call of the day. The CSW can hence garner optimal advantage out of Ethiopia's assignment as the country helps women participate fully in the economy and in the political process, as well as empower them to make decisions about their own well-being as well.

Opinion

Due attention should be given to encourage the activities of startups in Africa

BY STAFF REPORTER

The 10th Session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development (ARFSD-10) will be held in hybrid format on 23-25 April 2024 at the headquarters of the African Union Commission (AUC) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

The theme of the forum is "Reinforcing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063 and eradicating poverty in times of multiple crises: effective delivery of sustainable, resilient and innovative solutions."

According to Nassim Oulmane, Acting Director of the Technology Climate Change, and Natural Resource Management Division of the ECA, while African member States are past midway in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, progress on most SDGs is off-track and is either moving much too slowly or has regressed below the 2015 baseline; Achieving the SDGs by the set deadline of 2030 is contingent on stepping up implementation through ambitious and bold solutions and action.

"ARFSD-10 is a timely opportunity to address shortcomings and capitalize on emerging opportunities to ensure robust, accelerated and timely implementation of the SDGs and Agenda 2063. In addition, participants will play a key role in mobilizing Africa's inputs for the Summit of the Future to be held in September 2024," he adds.

Jointly organized by the ECA in collaboration with the AUC, the African Development Bank and UN system organizations, the Forum aims to assess progress and exchange knowledge, best practices, and policy solutions to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in line with regional priorities.

The SDGs goals on the ARFSD-10 agenda are: Goal 1 (No poverty), Goal 2 (Zero Hunger), Goal 13 (Climate Action), Goal 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions); and Goal 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) and the corresponding goals of Agenda 2063.

Several pre-events and side events aligned with the theme and subthemes of the Forum will precede ARFSD-10 from 17 April to 22 April. These include Coding Camp for African Girls; A Science Technology and Innovation Boot Camp for young people; a Youth Forum on the Summit of the Future and the 6th African Science, Technology and Innovation Forum. Other events include a Dialogue Session on Carbon Markets, Africa Climate Talks and Review of Progress on Food Systems. The Deputy Secretary General, Amina Mohammed is also slated to lead the annual meeting of the Regional Collaborative Platform for Africa, and a retreat of African UN Resident Coordinators.

"For Africa, integrated implementation of the SDGs and the Agenda 2063 is essential; and we need actions and solutions at scale to achieve both," he says and notes that out of ARFSD-10 will be key messages comprising specific issues of importance,

and a declaration, which will inform the forthcoming global UN High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development later in the year.

Participants will include high-level policy makers and experts from ministries and agencies responsible for finance and economic development, social affairs, environment and natural resources management, statistics, agriculture and food security, science, technology and innovation and other ministries from the 54 ECA member States. Representatives from the African Union Commission, Regional Economic Communities and other regional and sub regional organizations as well as UN system agencies, development partners, major groups that include civil society organizations, the private sector and academia will be in attendance.

ARFSD is one of the three mechanisms mandated to follow-up, review and catalyze actions to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted by UN Member States in September 2015.

Nine sessions of the Regional Forum have been held to date.

According to inafrika.com technology can make a difference in transforming the economy of Africa. The possibilities of what can be achieved with technology today are limitless. Innovative new technology has the potential to address the majority of the world's current challenges. The biggest problems facing Africa – and the world – include tackling the climate crisis, food production, accessibility, and delivering world-class education and healthcare to the most vulnerable.

The future belongs to those countries that fully embrace technology and its potential to transform lives, it indicated. But how well these innovative solutions grow largely depends on societal frameworks, governmental regulations and resource provision in the ecosystems these startups operate in. Like a living organism, everyone in the ecosystem needs to work in unison to create an environment that will allow these solutions to thrive.

Whether or not innovative startups thrive very much depends on the supportive ecosystems, networks and governments that enable – or stymie – the development of creative solutions.

The challenges continuously raised in the economic growth journey of developing countries especially those in Africa are usually the same like climate change, knowledge and skill as well as technological gap. All relevant forums should also take in to considerations all these issues in their deliberations. Especially the 10th Session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development (ARFSD-10) is an opportune moment to see the untapped potential of startups in the continent and make use of it to reinforce the continents development.

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The Ethiopian Herald

Business & Economy

Over one billion birr obtained from import substitution

BY ABEBE WOLDEGIORGIS

Ethiopia aspires to join the middle income countries by 2030 and the government is devoting its time, finance and human resource for attaining structural change. Currently, agriculture plays a dominant role in the economy containing 80 % of the labor force and is a major export and accounting for more than 78 % of exports. While the service sector plays about 40 % the role of the manufacturing sector role is insignificant at around 14 %, making the path to structural change challenging.

The manufacturing sector utilizes relatively well trained labor force, technology and promotes itself from low productive activity to higher ones, employing thousands of workers in small plots of land. It creates forward and backward links both with the agriculture and the services sector, serving as an import substitute, boosting exports attracting foreign investment, and accelerating the private sector's role in the economy. In contrary, though the agriculture sector plays dominant role in the economy, it is vulnerable to the extreme climate condition both to drought and flood, subsistence by its nature, most farmers engaged in farming with less than half hectare of land, utilizes small amount of modern inputs such as fertilizer, herb and pesticides which affects its yield.

In addition, due to population growth in the rural part from time to time farmer's size of their plot is fragmenting which again makes the farming activities environmentally unsustainable.

Therefore, shifting the labor force stranded in the rural part of the country to the non-farming sectors which have high productive rate such as the manufacturing and the service is helpful to attain structural change in which pave the way to attaining structural change and joining the middle income countries by 2030.

The government tried its level best to expand the manufacturing sector. It introduced new laws to attract local and foreign investors to engage in the sector, constructed industrial parks in various places of the country equipped with internet and banking services and clean water. It also provides shades in the park with fair rent.

Considering the pivotal role of the manufacturing sector in attaining the structural change, long ago, the government has been developing the energy sector by exploiting sources such as hydro power, geothermal, wind, solar and others. It is understood that without supplying reliable energy, expanding manufacturing is impossible.

Among the products manufactured in



Packed products before supplied to the market in the industry parks

the industrial parks, textile and garment, leather and leather products, agro-business, and pharmaceuticals have supported the nation's aspiration for import substitution. This effort has helped the country save hard currency and address macroeconomic challenges, such as debt service, foreign currency crunch, inflation, unemployment, and illicit trade.

As mentioned above, boosting the manufacturing industry is essential for transforming the economy and yet the sector is dependent on inputs imported from overseas market which needs its meager hard currency. Therefore, substituting of some products imported from abroad helps the nation to save hard currency and the ongoing efforts in these regard should be strengthened.

According to the Ministry of Industry, the primary goal of the import substitution policy is to protect, strengthen, and grow local industries using a variety of tactics, including tariffs, import quotas, and subsidized government loans. The objective is to bring about structural changes by creating investment opportunities in non-traditional sectors.

Countries implementing this mechanism attempt to shore up production channels for each stage of a product's development. Import Substitution is generally referring to a policy that eliminates the importation of the commodity and allows for the production in the domestic market.

The objective of this policy is to bring about structural changes in the economy. The structural change is brought about by creating gaps in the process of eliminating imports and thus making investment possible in the nontraditional sectors. From a war-torn and famine-plagued country at the beginning of the 1990s, Ethiopia is today emerging as one of the fastest-growing economies in Africa. Growth in Ethiopia has surpassed that of every other sub-Saharan country over the past decades. The

government has set its eyes on transforming the country into a middle-income country by 2030, and into a leading manufacturing hub in Africa.

A conscious move to stimulate industrial growth in Ethiopia began in the mid-1950s with the formulation of the First Five-year Plan (FFYP). Ethiopia has seen three different governments over the last eight decades. In keeping with the political ideologies governing the economic principles of the time, these successive governments adopted different policies for the development of industry in Ethiopia.

The current Government plans to privatize leading state owned enterprises signal a significant shift toward market-based reforms and a new flexibility with regard to economic policy making. At the moment, implementation of import substitution is not as effective as it should be compared to the great emphasis given by the government, such as, giving out several incentives to attract Foreign Direct Investment and the potential that the country has in terms of resources and market, Ethiopia's import substitution effort has long way to go to achieve the desired outcomes.

According to the newly endorsed Homegrown Economic Reform agenda, the government clearly states that efforts will be made to achieve a varying degree of import substitution of wheat, cotton, rice, and oilseeds (i.e., for agro-industries), and sufficient and high-quality production of lowland pulse commodities as well as sesame for the export market and irrigation based small-scale commercial production of selective commodities. By doing so, the government aims to reduce mounting debt, a shortage of foreign exchange, a swelling unemployment rate, inflation, low productivity, and workforce skills mismatched to the economy's needs.

Development planners, until the late sixties used the import substitution strategy as a pillar of all their efforts. This strategy is based

on industrialization through establishment or boosting of existing enterprises producing goods which were formerly imported. There are two prerequisites to this strategy of development. First, a country must have a substantial amount of imports and secondly new manufacturing industries, which are to produce the goods that take the place of commodities formerly brought in from abroad.

The recent assessment regarding import substitution reveals that, Arerti Industrial Park has earned more than 1 billion Birr from import substituted products in the last eight months, Industrial Parks Development Cooperation (IPDC) announced.

Arerti Industrial Park, which is one of the investment centers managed by IPDC, has secured the income by offering various products produced by the park to the domestic market in eight months of the 2023/24 Ethiopian fiscal year, it was indicated.

Zemen Junedin IPDC's Investment Promotion and Marketing division Deputy CEO said that, more than 19.4 million USD has been saved in the production of various import substituting products at the industrial park.

Zemen also pointed out that, market linkages worth more than 12.5 million USD have been created over the last eight months through providing resources and raw materials to manufacturers from the surrounding area.

In addition to the market linkage and import substitution, more than 830 new jobs have been created for citizens, and now more than 1500 citizens have job opportunities in the park.

Currently, there are three investors who have invested in Arerti Industrial Park and are engaged in the production process of garments and textiles as well as ceramics and wood products.

In the Sphere of Diplomacy

Ethio-China strategic partnership producing fruits

BY DANIEL ALEMAYEHU

Tested diplomatic endeavors are the key features that Ethiopia has been reflecting for decades. The country has established win-win diplomatic partnerships with every nation across the globe that craves for a mutual interest. Regarding its economic, political or people to people partnerships and Ethiopia does everything to keep the momentum of its relations.

In recent times, Ethiopia has been maintaining its course regarding its diplomatic partnership with multiple nations. The best example can be the partnership between Ethiopia and the Government of the People's Republic of China that keeps getting better and better. The two counterparts have played their role in order to sustain their diplomatic togetherness by defending their national interest without neglecting or meddling in the issue of the other.

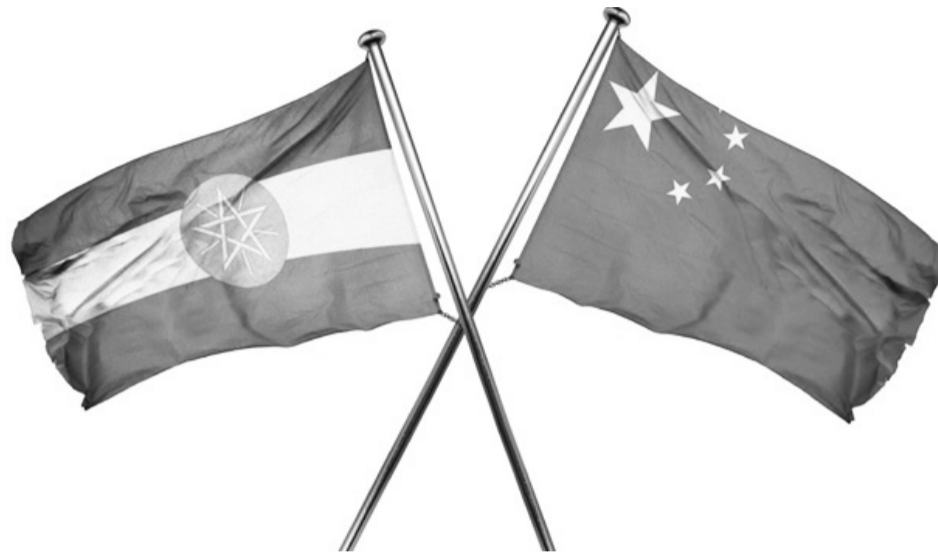
Back in October 2023, when Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) was paying an official visit to Beijing, the two countries announced their long-rooted economic and political partnership would be even better in the years to come. The two counterparts have elevated their partnerships to a new zenith and announced that the partnership has become an "All-Weather Strategic Cooperation Partnership".

According to a report, during the Ethiopia and China joint investment and trade cooperation that held in Addis Ababa in May 2022, Demeke Mekonnen, Former Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister also noted that, China has proven to be Ethiopia's most trusted partner and that its support continues to sustain Ethiopia's economic growth trajectory.

The two parties have been working together regarding the economic, political and people to people relations in the past many years. China has been one of the very first economic partners of Ethiopia by supporting the latter in technology and knowledge and skill transformations.

As China introduced its global approach through its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), the nation holds the notion of financing and building infrastructures throughout its partners and developing world. Such approach lets Ethiopia manage to realize its dreams of building mega projects and infrastructures. China has been supporting Ethiopia's mega projects so as to help the latter achieve its long dream of becoming a middle-income country. China put its hands in the construction of local and trans-boundary railways like the Ethiop-Djibouti railways.

In addition, reports stated that the terminal expansion project of the Ethiopian Airlines was also financed by China's Export-Import Bank. China was also a key player when Ethiopia started to construct Industrial Parks across the country to realize Special



Economic Zones in different parts of Ethiopia. Again, in many of the industrial parks, Chinese companies have been involving especially in the manufacturing sector such as textile and leather industries.

Ethiopia's application and latter on inclusion in the BRICS bloc has strengthen the two nations partnership more than ever as the former will be able to enjoy the economic benefits from the bloc. China also accepted Ethiopia's move towards the bloc and ready to foster the togetherness.

Speaking of political diplomacy in the international arena, the Government of the People's Republic of China has stood with Ethiopia in many global scenarios when Ethiopia has become the epicenter of issues in front of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). Specifically, the two permanent members of the UNSC, China and Russia have managed be the sole supporters and to stand with Ethiopia in the time of the war in the northern part. Not only have those, the two aforementioned permanent members of the UNSC also backed Ethiopia when Egypt brought the issue of the construction of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD).

China was also there to appreciate and support the government and people of Ethiopia when the two main fighting parties of Ethiopia's Tigray conflict signed an Agreement on the permanent Cessation of Hostilities (CoHA) in Pretoria, South Africa. Besides, China has stretched its hands to provide humanitarian assistance to the people in need and support the government in the course of reconstruction. China has also agreed to alleviate Ethiopia's external debt burden.

Similarly, based on the two nations' all weather strategic partnership, Ethiopia has also expressed its support to the 'One China' policy. According to a previous press release by the Chinese embassy, "The Ethiopian Government reaffirms its adherence to the one-China principle, recognizes the Government of the People's Republic of China as the only legitimate government representing the whole of the nation, and supports all efforts made by China to achieve national reunification."

In people-to-people relation between the two nations, China has become one of the

main destinations for Ethiopian students. China's government has been creating different opportunities to provide multiple scholarships for Ethiopian students so that Ethiopians can go to China and grasp the knowledge and skills from the people of China.

In recent reports, Minister of Foreign Affairs Taye Atskeselassie held discussion with China's Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa, Ambassador Xue Bing. The discussion covered various issues of common interest, according to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Foreign Minister Taye said the two countries' relations reached the level of an all-weather strategic partnership in a number of fields. He reaffirmed the aspirations and commitment of Ethiopian government to deepening the courtiery relations on bilateral and multilateral arenas.

On his part, China's Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa Ambassador Xue Bing stressed that, Ethiopia is the first African country that entered into an all-weather partnership with China and a model for the rest of the continent. During the discussion the Special Envoy underscored the role Ethiopia plays for the success of the upcoming China-Horn of Africa Peace Conference and Forum of China Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) meeting which will be held the coming June and September in Beijing.

By the same token, the idea entertained by the ministry of Foreign Affairs is also accepted by the current incumbent, Prosperity Party. According to the reports, Public and International Relations Division Head of the Party Adisu Arega said that, the party will strengthen its strategic partnership with the Chinese Communist Party (CCP).

A high-level PP delegation led by Adisu Arega arrived in Beijing to solidify the strategic partnership between the two ruling parties. The head told a local media that the PP delegation will discuss with the leadership of CCP at various levels on ways of further strengthening partnership and fraternity between the parties.

According to him, the CCP will share experiences to PP delegation among others, on steps taken to ensure China's prosperity, the long journey it has traveled to achieve development without compromising its multicultural identity, and the positive outcomes of its non-interference policy in the internal affairs of other countries.

Ethiopia and China have established a long-standing diplomatic relationship, and PP has been making utmost efforts to elevate this partnership to a new level of cooperation and mutual benefit, Adisu added. He further noted that, visit of the PP delegation to China demonstrates that the previously agreed-upon capacity-building initiatives and experience-sharing programs with CCU are properly implemented.

The two counterparts have elevated their partnerships to a new zenith and announced that the partnership has become an "All-Weather Strategic Cooperation Partnership"

Society

“Small acts, when multiplied by millions can transform the world”

BY STAFF REPORTER

Volunteerism is an act that has valuable contributions in terms of addressing pressing social issues, lessening the burden of people, creating a sense of belongingness and bringing about positive outcomes. On the other hand, engaging in volunteering activities is a rewarding experience for individual volunteers because it provides one with a sense of purpose, creates psychological satisfaction aside from creating a strong sense of community and belongingness, helping to learn about the culture, beliefs and norms of people from different backgrounds.

Volunteerism has long been a deep rooted culture of Ethiopian society that they have been practicing for long in their day to day activities and a value system that they give it due attention for its moral, religious and cultural importance.

Ethiopians, against the backdrop of challenges - economic, social, peace and security, are always supportive and extend a helping hand to fellow people who are in need of their assistance; regardless of any differences.

Currently, with the aim to further instill the culture of volunteerism among the young people and help them discharge their social responsibility, thereby foster a sense of national unity, integration, and build a cohesive society at peace with each other, the government has launched the Ethiopian National Volunteer Community Service program in 2020.

As it was stated, the program aims to promote a culture of public service, to foster national integrity, to enhance respect for diversity, social cohesion and peaceful coexistence, contributing to sustainable peace and stability in the country.

In return, with the programs carried out thus far, millions of young people have taken part in different community centered programs and carried out constructive works.

According to the Ministry of Peace, since the announcement of the program, in eight rounds, 14 million young people have been involved in the national voluntary service; and activities that benefit the country and the community have been carried out.

Speaking to ENA, Chief Executive of the National Volunteer Community Service at the Ministry of Peace, Gemechisa Ticha said that, the National Volunteer Community Service was launched in 2020 with the aim to help young people play a role in building national consensus and sustaining peace. “The participation of young people in cross-border voluntary activities has a greater contribution to reinforce unity, solidarity and togetherness among the community.”



“The participation of young people in cross-border voluntary activities has a greater contribution to reinforce unity, solidarity and togetherness among the community.”

Stating that volunteers are playing a substantial part to sustain lasting peace, he said that they are providing services that lessen societal problems and benefit the community. Merely in this year, at the forums organized under the theme “Adwa for sustainable peace and nation building,” 5 million youths took part. To this point, through involving over 14 million youths at the National Voluntary Service programs held at different rounds, activities that are crucial to nation building and community development were carried out.

Mentioning that the ninth round of the National Voluntary Service program training will start before long, he said that 1,500 young people will take part in the training. In the previous eight rounds, encouraging results have been witnessed. For instance, it was made possible to support the youth to play a role in national consensus and develop a sense of patriotism and work for national consensus.

The work of nation building and sustainable peace is a multigenerational and a continuous act. Owing to this, the National Voluntary Service program was designed and has become operational to ensure its sustainability, he further said.

As part of this, an operational system is being prepared for the voluntary service and a digital system that enables the young people to exchange information has been put into effect. By doing so, a goal has been set for young people to be role models for others by making volunteerism their lifelong ambition.

What is more, the Ethiopian Youth Voluntary Association is being formed for this purpose, and so far 34 thousand members have been registered. Furthermore, to make the national youth voluntary service more sustainable, an independent procedure of the youth voluntary association is being prepared, he added.

Non-governmental organizations and the community at large to support the government’s efforts to strengthen voluntary services, he urged.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Peace in collaboration with Jimma University, welcomed the 9th round Trainees of the National Volunteer program, at the premises of Jimma University.

In his message at the program, Adviser to Peace Minister, at the rank of State Minister Kaydaki Gezahegn said that, the primary objective of the peace national volunteer training program is to support young people develop social values and moral standards, and bring about mutual understanding which is vital to the most ethnically and culturally diverse countries like Ethiopia.

Taking part in the National Volunteer program is a good opportunity for volunteers and an activity that gives psychological satisfaction to trainees. Thus, trainees understanding the rewarding experiences of volunteerism should execute their civic responsibility and leave their positive marks in the country’s efforts to create sustainable peace and national consensus.

He also said that, training will create favorable conditions for young trainees to become mentally and physically fit and to lay the foundation for social cohesion thereby making their own positive contribution to the economic development of the country.

Wishing the training to be productive and fruitful, Kaydaki also urged trainees to attend the training with diligence and strict discipline during their stay at the university in order to come out with the necessary ethics, attitude, skills and physical fitness that can be useful to carry out their services.

In his welcoming speech, representative of Jimma University President, Eng. Ephrem Waqqira said that, Jimma University has been carrying out various activities joining hands with the Ministry of Peace to make the National Peace Volunteers program a success and realize the University’s motto: “We are in the community,” from the 1st to the 9th round. We have also practically proved that we are ambassadors of peace.”

While talking about the training and the responsibility expected from trainees Eng. Ephrem said: “the training that is given to you has tremendous roles in terms of strengthening the culture of solidarity, mutual respect and social ties and making the national economic transition a reality by overcoming prejudice and hatred. Thus, you should serve the community with good manners and integrity in line with the knowledge you have gained from the training.”

At the reception program, officials from the Ministry of Peace, leaders and staff of Jimma University, religious leaders, elders and other invited guests took part.

Planet Earth

Ethiopia weighs the multiple advantages of harnessing its hydropower dams potential

BY STAFF REPORTER

It is generally agreed that nothing is perfect on Earth. This claim includes the production of electricity the construction of hydro electric power dams. Hydroelectric-production facilities are indeed not perfect starting from the cost of building the dam up to the negative effects on the environment and local ecology. But if we weigh the advantages over the disadvantages we can see that there are a number of advantages of hydroelectric-power production as opposed to fossil-fuel power production.

Some studies indicate that over the last two decades, almost 1,000 hydropower dams have been built around the globe. Ethiopia, one of the countries in the Horn of Africa, has an abundance of hydroelectric resource potential that can meet the country's energy demand. However, this energy resource has been underutilized, and the country has one of the lowest per capita consumption rates of electricity.

Currently Ethiopia is undertaking the construction of various hydroelectric power dams in various corners. Despite the huge sum of investment and the other challenges the country weighs the advantages over the disadvantages and is giving due attention for the development of the sector.

Recognizing that energy access and security are critical factors in economic growth, the country has launched a number of hydroelectric projects to meet rising energy demand, as well as a plan to export electricity to neighboring countries.

Hydropower is a clean source because it generates electricity without emitting greenhouse gases or other pollutants: it helps decrease fossil fuel consumption, thereby reducing air pollution and mitigating climate change.

And it provides renewable energy that is unlimited in time. This is because its sources, namely rivers and streams fed by the natural water cycle, are renewed. Furthermore, a hydropower plant does not take water away from the environment. That's because whatever is removed is completely given back over time: its water footprint is therefore low.

It is also a resource that's available in a great many countries, which can thus produce energy in a more self-sufficient and sustainable way, thereby reducing the need to import raw materials.

Hydropower is better for the environment than other major sources of electrical power, which use fossil fuels. Hydropower plants do not emit the waste heat and gases—common with fossil-fuel driven facilities—which are

major contributors to air pollution, global warming and acid rain. The mining and drilling required to acquire fossil fuels for other power sources also have a significant negative environmental impact.

Many hydropower plants are located in the headwaters of river basins where they can help control the wide fluctuations in water flow commonly found in these areas. By increasing water flow during dry months these projects help to enhance aquatic habitats. Conversely, by reducing flow during periods of heavy runoff the plants can prevent damage to vegetation and wildlife along stream banks.

Faced with water availability that can vary over time, power plants are extremely flexible. Generating systems require a very small amount of energy in order to come on line, so much so that in a matter of minutes even a large plant can go from being idle to full power, and vice versa. This responsiveness depends on the type of turbine used and the management of water flows.

A pumped storage hydropower plant acts as an energy store: excess electricity generated by wind or solar plants when weather conditions are favorable can be used to pump water into the upper reservoir. Later, when there is no sun or wind, the water can be

used in order to generate electricity through turbines. In this way, the hydropower plant has a stabilizing effect on the power grid.

A hydropower plant not only generates electricity, but it also interacts with the area in which it is located by contributing to its development.

First and foremost, it brings a clear benefit to the environment: the amount of water that is released (after generating power) can be controlled over time and with great precision, both in terms of flow rate and total volume. This means being able to regulate the flow continuously, thus greatly reducing the risk of flooding during heavy rains, which also benefits crops in irrigated areas downstream.

Hydropower plants help improve the health of waterways: on the one hand, the regularization of flows can help reclaim marshy areas by reducing the accumulation of standing water; on the other, the plant's infrastructure retains branches, trees and other solid objects, thus facilitating the navigability of rivers downstream.

Pedestrian paths are created around a reservoir, for operational purposes, and these can also be made available for tourist use. Where possible, bicycle paths can be set up around dams, and this also enhances areas that often feature beautiful scenery.