



The Ethiopian Herald

Vol LXXX No 194 24 April 2024 -Miyaziya 16 , 2016

Wednesday

Price Birr 10.00



Ashebir Balcha

Ethiopia continues electricity supply to Sudan, albeit unsettled payment

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

ADDIS ABABA – Ethiopia’s continued electricity supply to Sudan, despite the latter’s failure to settle the payments, showcases the execution of its Foreign Policy that centers on fostering good neighborliness, the Ethiopian Electric Utility (EEU) said.

Approached by *The Ethiopian Herald*, EEP Executive Director Ashebir Balcha stated that the electricity supply to Sudan is continued unabated despite the latter’s inability to settle the payments due to the ongoing civil war.

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Ethiopia’s Agenda 2063 implementation impressive : Minister

• 10th ARFSD forum kicks-off

BY ASHENAFI ANIMUT

ADDIS ABABA – Through well-aligned and innovative financing schemes, Ethiopia has become one of few African countries that have registered impressive results in Agenda 2063 implementation, the Ministry of Planning and Development (MoPD) said.

MoPD Minister Fistum Assefa (PhD) made the above remark on the behalf of President Sahle-work Zewdie yesterday while commencing the 10th session of African Regional Forum on Sustainable Development (ARFSD). The 10th ARFSD forum is being held under the theme “Reinforcing the 2030 Agenda for

Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063 and Eradicating Poverty in Times of Multiple Crises: The Effectiveness of Sustainable, Resilient and Innovative Solutions.”

Fistum (PhD) also noted on the occasion that Ethiopia has registered notable results in implementing the goals of Agenda 2063.

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Ethiopia-South Sudan relations on rise

• Hold experience sharing to bring women’s holistic empowerment

BY MESERET BEHAILU

ADDIS ABABA – The Ethiopia-South Sudan bilateral relations will be encouraged through their partnership on security and peace, education, infrastructure development, and women empowerment arenas, the House of Peoples’ Representatives (HoPR) said.

The HoPR Foreign Relations and Peace Affairs Standing Committee Deputy Chairperson Fathe Mahdi (PhD) made the above remark yesterday while holding an experience sharing program with South Sudanese delegation.

Speaking at the event, the deputy chairperson noted that Ethiopia and South Sudan have a

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NBI keen on non-members’ accession

• Ethiopia committed to initiative’s expansion

BY YESUF ENDRIS

ADDIS ABABA- Consolidated efforts are underway to enable all the Nile riparian countries to utilize the river fairly and equally, the Nile Basin Initiative (NBI) said, calling for the non-member states’ accession.

In his opening remark at the discussion forum recently, Water and Energy State Minister Abreha Adugna (PhD) urged Civil Society Organizations and developmental partners to encourage non-member Nile riparian states to join the initiative.

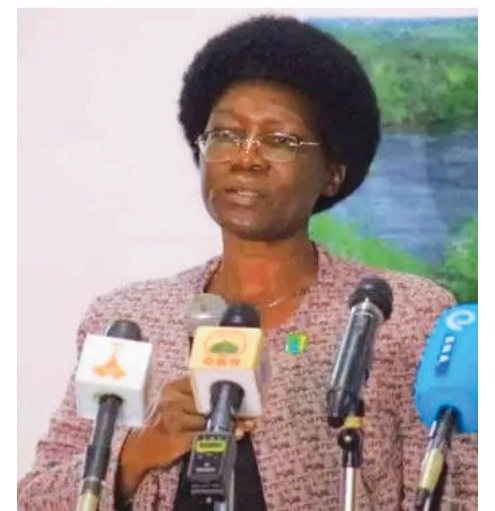
As Ethiopia’s diplomatic efforts continue to expand the Initiative, four countries have signed the Cooperation Framework Agreement (CFA) of the Initiative that would give significant impetus to ensure fair utilization of Nile waters. In this regard,



Abreha Adugna (PhD)

South Sudan is approaching to join the Initiative.

The state minister further noted that Ethiopia



Florence Grace Adongo

aims for universal membership of the NBI and to establish international legal backing for water rights protection. As the Initiative

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News



ILO urges nations to incorporate climate mitigation policies

BY ESSEYE MENGISTE

ADDIS ABABA—The International Labour Organization (ILO) urged countries to incorporate occupational safety and health considerations into their climate change responses and improve climate mitigation strategies.

A new report by the ILO has revealed that over 70% of the global workforce is likely to be exposed to climate-change-related health hazards. In the new report, ILO has called nations to incorporate integrated workplace safety and health facets in their climate change responses both policies and actions.

The report also explored that currently nation's responses, including revising or creating new legislation, regulations and guidance, and improving climate mitigation strategies such as energy efficiency measures in working environments.

“Working in safe and healthy environments is recognized as one of the ILO’s fundamental principles and rights at work. We must deliver on that commitment in relation to climate change, just as in every other aspect of work,” said Manal Azzi, OSH Team Lead at the ILO.

The report, ensuring safety and health at work in a changing climate, states that over 2.4 billion workers are likely to be exposed to excessive heat at some point during their work, with the proportion increasing from 65.5% to 70.9% since 2000.

The report also estimated that 18,970 lives and 2.09 million disability-adjusted life years are lost annually due to 22.87 million occupational injuries, and 26.2 million people worldwide living with chronic kidney disease linked to workplace heat stress.

The report also highlights the impact of UV radiation, workplace air pollution, pesticides, and parasitic and vector-borne diseases on workers.

DNDi, partners launch 2nd VL medicine clinical trial

BY YOHANES JEMANEH

ADDIS ABABA—A second phase clinical trial designed to develop safer, simpler and patient-friendly oral medicine to treat Visceral Leishmaniasis (VL) has been launched in Ethiopia.

The study, which is being conducted by Drugs for Neglected Diseases Initiative (DNDi) and its partners aimed at reducing the side effects and the pain patients sustain while taking the existing VL medicine - an injection given at hospital daily for 17 days, a treatment that may also present rare but life-threatening side effects, including to the heart, liver and pancreas, according to a press release sent to The Ethiopian Herald indicated.

In contrast, DNDi said in the statement that the new molecule under study in Ethiopia, called “LXE408”, is administered in the form of oral pills and is expected to be safer than the current treatment.

“This is very significant that Ethiopia, an endemic country, is conducting a Phase II clinical trial on a new chemical entity — a novel molecule with the potential to safely and effectively treat visceral leishmaniasis,” said Eleni Ayele (MD), the clinical trial co-Principal Investigator at University of Gondar, Leishmaniasis Research and Treatment Center (LRTC).

She stated in the release that the current treatment options in Ethiopia have severe limitations as they are potentially toxic, necessitate injections and cold-chain supplies, and require patients to travel to faraway hospitals to be hospitalized for long periods.



“Our hope is that this new oral treatment will be efficacious and less toxic and can be given to patients at the primary healthcare level, close to their homes,” Eleni said.

This would help the patients to access treatment earlier, which could significantly decrease morbidity and transmission, she said, adding that if the trial is successful, it could go a long way toward enabling the sustainable elimination of this terrible disease.

The molecule is tested alongside the standard of care in Ethiopia and 52 adults from 18 to 44 years will join the study, according to the statement.

“We are moving towards a new generation of treatments for leishmaniasis. Finding new treatments is key if we want to sustainably eliminate visceral leishmaniasis in all parts of the world, including in African countries where the burden remains high. We need medical innovation,” said Fabiana Alves

(MD), Director of Leishmaniasis Programme at DNDi.

“We hope this new clinical trial will contribute to deliver better, patient-friendly, effective medicines that are accessible to everyone, with no exception.”

Also known as kala-azar, visceral leishmaniasis is the world’s deadliest parasitic killer after malaria. It causes fever, weight loss, spleen and liver enlargement, and, if not treated, death. Kala-azar is transmitted by the bite of infected sandflies and is endemic in 80 countries, mainly in Eastern Africa, South Asia, and Latin America. An estimated 50,000 to 90,000 new cases occur worldwide annually, and half are children under 15.

The clinical trial in Ethiopia is financially supported by the European and Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership (EDCPT), as part of the VL-INNO project, bringing together a wide range of partners.

Authority unveils essential veterinary vaccines, medicines’ list

BY YESUF ENDRIS

ADDIS ABABA—The news lists of essential veterinary medicines and vaccines for stakeholders have been made public, Ethiopian Agricultural Authority disclosed.

From now and on the introduced lists would be used as guiding rules for veterinary medicine and vaccine importers and manufacturers, it was learnt.

Speaking at the launching event, the Authority’s Director General Ambassador Diriba Kuma said that Ethiopia has been losing opportunities because of absence of good quality and supply of medicines and vaccines.

“The livestock population of Ethiopia is rated number one in Africa and the tenth in the World. But, the national income that we are receiving from the sector is low. We need to work with special attention to make the livestock production imperative to the GDP,” he said.

The Livestock comprises Ethiopia’s 40% of agricultural sector. The livelihood across low lands of the country is dependent of livestock. The foreign currency generated by livestock export is also significant, but not developed compared to the potential, according to the Director General.

Listing most essential drugs is instrumental



to make a formal approach to qualify disease prevention mechanisms. The authority will guide importers and pharmaceutical manufacturers’ through such technical supports.

The authority pointed out that illegal drug trading and shortage of foreign currency are as the most pressing challenges.

Brooke Ethiopia Country Director, Yohannes Kassim also noted that Ethiopia has no sufficient livestock pharmaceutical supplies including medicines and vaccines. Livestock products need quality medicines and vaccines. So, the introduced list of essential medicines and drugs would help

the sector to access better quality products, he said.

He also urged public-private partnership to enhance livestock management and veterinary services.

Misuse of medicines and vaccines is one of problems witnessed in veterinary medical service providers. In this case, the adoption of essential medicines would help professions to use most appropriate ones, he commented.

Medicines and vaccines of pets, cattle, sheep and goat, horses and camel have been listed in the newly adopted essential medicines list, *The Ethiopian Herald* learnt.

News

Digital economy focuses on youth employment

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

ADDIS ABABA- Digital economy stands in better position than the remaining sectors in terms of creating jobs and easing the rampant youth unemployment in the country, experts in the issue said.

Speaking to local media, the United Nations Capital Development Fund Coordinator in Ethiopia Ibrahim Mama stated that in recent years, the sector has created ample jobs for the youth given most of the innovations in technology and Fintech are destined to the new generation. "In turn, the digital economy would open doors for the youth to create further employment."

Digital Ethiopia 2025 is a huge milestone in terms of enhancing financial transactions as well as introducing new digital financial services over the years, he added.

"Ethiopia has carried out several activities to boost the contribution of the digital economy to the GDP. The more the infrastructure of the digital economy is strengthened, the better other sectors in the country would engage in



delivering their services in the system."

Ibrahim also stated that the sectors would not only deliver their services, but they could also begin providing new service and deliver it in an efficient way.

There are ongoing activities in different

sectors including education, transport, and health in the digital system. Of which, the effort that is being put in the agricultural sector would have a paramount importance to Ethiopia's economy and the public's livelihoods.

The United Nations Capital Development

Fund is partnering with the Ministry of Agriculture and Agricultural Transformation Institute to support smallholder farmers and small scale producers in digitizing the latter's activities in a bid to increase agricultural product and productivity.

Nonetheless, more efforts need to be put in place to enhance the community's digital financial literacy to achieve better results in the sector, the coordinator emphasized.

Kifiya Financial Technology Founder MunirDuri on his part stated that Ethiopia is already building the digital economy infrastructure. What is left is creating and upgrading different innovations in the sector.

According to Munir, equal attention should be given to curb cyber security breaches that could come along with digital systems. Thus, more awareness creation activities and training need to be available for the community at all levels.

Apart from enhancing digital literacy, due emphasis needs to be given in encouraging consultants in the area, he remarked.

Ethiopia's Agenda...

"Ethiopia has also made significant progress in mobilizing the domestic and international resources for rapid and sustained economic growth, and development. And thus, this experience could be benchmarked for accelerated implementation of the remaining goals of the strategic plans."

"This forum is timely and relevant to review the progress achieved, the challenges encountered and the way forward in implementing the sustainable development in our continent," she added.

Africa has faced multiple and interlocking challenges including climate change, geopolitical tensions and economic instability and extreme poverty among other related pressing issues in recent years.

According to the Minister, various barriers are seriously hindering Africa's efforts toward the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

and reversed the hard-won gains. Therefore, these hurdles need the resolute commitment to eradicate poverty and ensure the effective delivery of sustainable, resilient, and innovative solutions.

She called on attention to be given to the most vulnerable groups in Africa and ensure that the interventions are guided by the principles of equity, solidarity and sustainability. Accordingly, holistic and integrated approaches are required for lure sizable investments in peace-building, quality education, healthcare, infrastructure, and sustainable means of livelihood focusing on women and youth empowerment.

"Similarly, facilitating youth-driven innovation and harnessing inventions would be catalysts towards a transformative journey to sustainable development, unlocking new opportunities for inclusive progress and poverty eradication."

Reaffirming Ethiopia's firm commitment, Fitsum (PhD) called on member states to redouble efforts to achieve the shared vision of a more just, resilient, and sustainable world for current and future generations.

While making a call to action for all member states to revitalize engagements, African Union Commission Deputy Chairperson Monique Nsanzabaganwa stressed that AU and UN need to continue efforts on the mechanisms put in place to harmonize the set strategies.

It is also highly significant to budget and network to de-risk private investment and international finance to help smoothly flow in. Also, collaboration and engaging all member states to domesticate in the respective countries should support the framework of private sectors of the society in the country to implement the framework, she remarked.

Ethiopia continues...

Ethiopia has been exerting efforts to make Sudan pay over the 130 million USD debt of electricity provision of the past two years; however, it has not suspended power supply to its neighbor. "This is a clear manifestation of Ethiopia's Foreign Policy which prioritizes fostering cooperation with neighboring states."

The director further noted that Ethiopia's Foreign Policy also promotes cooperation and standing with its neighbors during their difficult times. Evidently, Sudan was paying some money to the electricity supply during the COVID-19 outbreak, but the internal problems that have broken out in the country impeded it from paying the remaining.

Previously, Sudan imported some 200MW of electricity from Ethiopia on a daily basis; however, the damage that has occurred on electric infrastructure and other facilities reduced the supply to 80MW, he added.

"The Ethiopian government has the principled stance on fostering mutual growth with neighboring countries and amidst the shortage of foreign currency; it prefers to stand by Sudan during its difficult time."

Currently, the two countries have been exchanging data via national power control stations and Ethiopia aims to employ the electricity supply to secure foreign currency and get additional access to the sea, Ashebir elaborated.

NBI keen...

commemorates its 25th anniversary, Ethiopia's commitment to responsible Nile water utilization is getting positive responses from other international actors.

"The initiative offers immense benefits including energy security, food sovereignty, and climate change mitigation for all Nile riparian countries. Despite being among lesser users of the Nile River, Ethiopia champions the Initiative as a beacon of hope for equitable

resource management."

NBI Executive Director Florence Grace Adongo also mentioned the Initiative's role in facilitating informed decision-making and fostering cooperation among Nile riparian states.

The director stressed the need for a legally permanent foundation that would align the Initiative with global standards of trans-border cooperation. The determined efforts of Nile

riparian countries toward sustainable economic development through shared water resource utilization and power generation is also crucial.

The Initiative involves national-level partnerships, presents research-backed potentials, and projects to key stakeholders across various sectors. By doing this it aims to foster widespread adoption of water programs and projects based on strategic analysis, she remarked.

Ethiopia-South Sudan...

long standing relationship that has been invigorated in various areas during the past over many years.

Ethiopia has a strong belief in mutual development through utilizing natural resources in a fair and reasonable manner and it gives due attention to make mega projects including the Abbay Dam (GERD) benefits neighboring countries. Besides, Ethiopia gives due emphasis to road

construction to connect the two countries whilst 250 South Sudan Students obtained scholarship so far.

"The experience sharing would address women challenges and bring adequate outcome in politics, economic, and social development," Fathe elaborated.

South Sudanese Gender, Child and Social Welfare Minister Aya Benjamin, who is also the leader of the delegation, said, "Ethiopia

is our second home and we prefer the better even in the time of crisis."

She also stated that the experience sharing program would bring significant roles in ensuring women political and economic empowerment whilst due attention has been attached to children rights.

HoPR Women Caucus Kimiya Junedi on her part said that the main aim of the experience sharing is increasing women participation

in peace keeping, development, diplomacy, decision making, and the likes.

"Previously, we draw important lesson from South Africa and Kenya in the issue of women empowerment while we are sharing our experience to South Sudanese delegation today. Such programs will play a significant role in realizing the common agenda that to ensure women empowerment and children rights at large."

Opinion

Collaborative efforts of ENDC, broader community herald a promising future

BY ADDISALEM MULAT

The Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission (ENDC) has been hugely engaged in studying and exploring global experience with a view to conducting successful National Dialogue that will address the country's age-long contentious problems. Studying the experiences of others has become a common experience globally and attempts have been made to understand the reasons behind the successes and failures of national dialogues that have been conducted in various countries.

External interference, government interference, lack of inclusiveness and others were among the main reasons for the failures of the National Dialogue conducted in different countries. On the other hand there are also nations that have made successful deliberations citing the experience of Tunisia.

By the same token, discussions have been made with various segments of society including political parties, civil society organizations and other parts of the society. Understanding of historical narratives on contentious issues is among the most important elements to conduct a successful National Dialogue.

Speaking to the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) ENDC Commissioner Prof. Mesfin Araya in the recent past stated that the commission has been established with the objectives of facilitating consultation between the various segments of the society by identifying the root causes of the difference in fundamental national issues and identifying the topics on which the discussion will take place.

He further stated that countries including Yemen and Sudan failed to execute successful National Dialogue because of the interference of external actors. Accordingly, conducting an all-inclusive dialogue that consists of the lower part of the society, religious leaders, civil society and others is crucial.

It is recalled that lately briefing the media, ENDC Spokesperson Tibebe Tadesse stated that the commission has been undertaking various activities to identify dialogue participants and mapping about 1,300 districts across the country in a bid to make the process inclusive and participatory.

He also indicated participants' identification has been taking place in various districts across the country while the commission has finalized the two activities in 850 districts.

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

This in black and white demonstrates the commitment of the ENDC to make the national dialogue a reality and get to the bottom of the existing problem making use of a wide spectrum of effective means.

In a previous interview with *The Ethiopian Herald* Anteneh Tsegaye (PhD), Assistant Professor of Intercultural Communication at Addis Ababa University said there is no one blueprint for the success or failure of all



ENDC-Gode-training

national dialogues as every conflict's context and demand are unique and dynamic. However, there are two central categories of factors that significantly affect the success or failure of the national dialogue; namely the political context factors and the design or process factors. First, the political context in which a national dialogue takes place can affect the likelihood of success or failure.

For example, political will significantly matters. The greater the level of political will and elite agreement on the way forward, the greater the likelihood of successful outcomes and implementation. Added to this, the links associated with other transitional processes also impact the outcome. National dialogue needs to be embedded in larger change processes in order to promote real structural change. If disconnected from other political processes, such as constitution-making. It is likely to be counter-productive. Also, there should be common ground among parties.

"The absence of diametrically opposed political camps can make it more likely to arrive at a common view or shared objectives in dialogue, allowing for the process to move forward. In contrast, drastically different views can exacerbate distrust and stall the process. The other interesting factor is the public buy-in. Public support or lack thereof can enable or constrain progress in the national dialogue process. The degree of buy-in is influenced by the availability of public information, good communication, and media engagement – all of which affect the level of transparency and understanding of the process."

In principle, national dialogue involves the public at all structural levels, formal or informal, and brings significant actors to the table, going beyond the elites, to deal with issues of discontents and misunderstanding in the course of the nation-building process. In its real sense, for example, civil society leaders, and even external actors, can initiate informal dialogues between key actors, even if they have lesser mandates than one initiated by the state.

These informal dialogues can entail trust-building meetings, negotiations, and consultations that lay the groundwork for formal national dialogue. In practice, however, it is often attempted after exclusive elite-based

negotiation formats which have failed or are considered inadequate to prevent further instability as lessons learned from the failure of countries in the current conflict zones.

Ethiopia needs a highly inclusive and bottom-up approach to a national dialogue. Engaging the public and civil society should enforce the Ethiopian national dialogue as the country owns indigenous approaches to dealing with conflicts and reconciliation processes.

Acquainted with immense knowledge and expertise and highly valued within the society, academicians are expected to be frontrunners to the successful conduct of the National Dialogue. It should be remembered that recently the ENDC along with Addis Ababa University (AAU) organized a discussion forum on the role of academia in the National Dialogue at Ras Mekonnen Hall.

Speaking at the forum, ENDC Deputy Chief Commissioner Hirut Gebreselassie stated that the academic community needs to engage to translate their knowledge and experience into various activities that will enable the National Dialogue a success.

More importantly, they are the part of the society that has basic ideological differences on national issues. Thus, they need to interpret their years of knowledge and experience to enable the nation reach a national consensus. Ethiopia has faced a number of challenges that have tested its nation building process throughout history. Similarly, there are pressing challenges that still need to be addressed as a country.

In a similar way, on the subject of the ongoing national dialogue process the Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission (ENDC) said it is compiling National Dialogue agendas forwarded from Ethiopians living abroad.

National dialogues are broad-based public gatherings, which are often intended to define key aspects of the political or constitutional future of a country, and are commonly the centerpiece of post-crisis transitions. On top of that national dialogues have become an integral part of the peacebuilding process in post-conflict and post-crisis countries. Despite their role, there is little documentation of the characteristics of these dialogues, their relative success and failure, as well as their long-term contribution to the peace and stability of the

countries involved, according to sources.

Ethiopian Teachers' Association in recent times said it is providing continuous support for the success of the Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission's (ENDC) 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 with the purpose of expediting 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.

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

It should be born in mind that the Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission (ENDC) said recently both the state-run and private media have the gaps in building the public's awareness about its preliminary activities, mentioning the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) is an exception.

While presenting the ENDC progress report to the House of Peoples Representatives, the Chief Commissioner Prof. Mesfin Araya stated that the mainstream media's coverage of the dialogue processes and progress has so far been inadequate. Yet, the EPA has done commendable jobs in availing timely and accurate information for the public.

Stating the information flow has not reached a desired level, Mesfin pleaded with both public and privately-owned media to discharge their responsibility in awareness creation and to re-report the ENDC progress. "We cannot reach the public with our sole effort. We need the active engagement of all stakeholders including private and community-based media."

Public media chiefs on their part pledged to give more coverage to the ENDC activities and to ensure the public right to access information.

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

Editorial

Opinion

Fostering innovation, entrepreneurial skills through technology

Ethiopia's drive to transfer knowledge, skills and technology and build up the capacity of citizens to innovation is progressing well and bearing promising outcomes in all aspects.

Mainly following the Home Grown Economic Reform devised to transform country's economy and achieve sustainable growth through embracing emerging technologies and transferring knowledge and skills, it has been possible to witness outstanding progresses.

Through this move, Ethiopia has made important strides in building its digital foundations, advancing citizens' technological capacities and reinforcing their innovative and entrepreneurial skills that are central for the social and economic development of the country.

For instance, following the efforts carried out to make the journey to "Digital Ethiopia" a success; amazing creative works that wowed everyone with admiration were made. The well-known humanoid robot Sophia and the other one created recently, Desta, can be mentioned as best showcased. Both of the works, whose operating systems were developed by the active engagement of young Ethiopians, have captured the attention of many people and inspired young people to follow suit.

More notably, the development of the robots has shown off Ethiopia's steady progress in the area and Ethiopians' potential to embrace emerging technologies and their determination to go along with such transformative forces amidst challenges.

Just the same, the new project dubbed as "Startup Ethiopia" is also the other platform that can build the transformative and entrepreneurial skills of the young people and it is an action that fosters their problem-solving abilities as young people are the future innovators and entrepreneurs who drive economic growth and development.

In the same way, the Space Science and Geo-Spatial Institute (SSGI) has lately announced that preparation for the second Ethiopian Remote Sensing Satellite (ETRSS- 2) project, which aims to develop satellites with a resolution of up to 0.5 meters is finalized. According to the Institute, when the satellite is put into practice it will have a meaningful contribution to the mapping of cities and create an opportunity to obtain information that is more accurate than what is currently provided by the satellite information service.

Not only in the robotic and satellite areas, Ethiopia's initiative to transfer knowledge and skills by applying artificial intelligence technology is also producing successful results in other areas including agriculture, finance, and other sectors.

It is true in today's rapidly advancing world, technology transfer, innovation and developing entrepreneurship skills among the youth have paramount importance and play irreplaceable roles to cope with the changing environment, address socio-economic challenges, accelerate economic growth and pave the way for a prosperous future.

As Innovation and Technology Minister Belete Molla stated at the sixth African Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) Forum underway at UNECA Headquarter, science, technology, and innovation are not silver bullets, but they are powerful tools that can help Africans to overcome their development challenges.

To this effect establishing a strong foundation for science, technology, and innovation is not only necessary but also mandatory.

With this in mind, Ethiopia has been taking a number of activities to create a conducive environment that is decisive for technology transfer and to foster innovation. In turn, the country has benefited significantly from utilizing the technology. However, in this ever changing world, to attune with the change, Ethiopia should further strengthen its infrastructure, and work committedly to harness the benefit accordingly.

Startups provide an alternative approach to Ethiopia's socio-economic development

BY SOLOMON DIBABA

Recently, Prime Minister Abiy launched a national startup program in a public gathering dedicated to the program. In addition, there was a national startup exhibition that was held as part of the launching ceremony. Launching a startup program in Ethiopia may not be easy but it can offer several economic advantages, contributing to the country's economic growth, job creation, innovation ecosystem, and overall development. Startups constitute a wide spectrum of Ethiopia's socio-economic profile with opportunities and challenges that need to be resolved.

In a country like Ethiopia where youth unemployment is rampant, startup programs can stimulate entrepreneurship and small business development, leading to the creation of new job opportunities. As startups grow and expand, they can hire employees, including skilled professionals and young graduates from Ethiopian universities and institutes of higher learnings thereby reducing unemployment and underemployment rates in Ethiopia.

By fostering a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship, startup programs contribute to economic diversification beyond traditional sectors such as agriculture and manufacturing. Encouraging startups in sectors like technology, healthcare, renewable energy, and consumer goods can enhance Ethiopia's resilience to economic shocks and global market fluctuations.

Moreover, Startups often focus on developing innovative products, services, and solutions to address market needs and societal challenges. By supporting startup programs, Ethiopia can drive technological advancement, promote digitalization, and foster a culture of innovation that spurs economic growth and competitiveness.

A thriving startup ecosystem can attract foreign investors, venture capitalists, and multinational corporations seeking investment opportunities and partnerships with promising startups. Foreign investment in Ethiopian startups can bring capital, expertise, and access to international markets, contributing to the country's economic development and global integration.

Startup programs play a vital role in building and nurturing a supportive entrepreneurship ecosystem comprising incubators, accelerators, working spaces, mentorship networks, and funding sources. A robust ecosystem provides aspiring entrepreneurs with the resources, guidance, and networks they need to launch and grow successful startup

Successful startups generate revenue through sales, licensing agreements, and investments, contributing to government tax revenues and fiscal sustainability. As startups scale their operations and achieve profitability, they become valuable contributors to Ethiopia's economy through corporate taxes, value-added taxes (VAT), and other levies.

Startups with innovative products and services have the potential to penetrate international markets and contribute to Ethiopia's export earnings. Government support for export-oriented startups, trade promotion activities, and market access initiatives can help Ethiopian startups compete globally and enhance the country's trade balance.

Startup programs can promote entrepreneurship and economic development in rural areas of Ethiopia, where there is significant untapped potential. By providing support for rural startups, the government can empower local communities, alleviate poverty, and foster inclusive growth across the country.

Overall, launching a startup program in Ethiopia can unlock new economic opportunities, drive innovation, and catalyze sustainable development, positioning the

country as a dynamic and competitive player in the global economy.

Several years back, the former Prime Minister of Ethiopia inaugurated a national startup initiative by allocating some 10 billion birr but the program failed to bring up the desired results. A year ago, the Development Bank of Ethiopia started a revolving loan scheme for the youth and registered hundreds and thousands of unemployed persons mostly from youth groups but the progress is still not in sight.

Many startups in Ethiopia fail within the first five years. Why is this so?

One of the main reasons for this high failure rate is poor financial resources and management. Many startups in Ethiopia do not have a clear understanding of their finances, which makes it difficult to make sound business decisions.

Secondly, what startups face is the gap between theory and practice management systems. Many Ethiopian startups are founded by entrepreneurs who have a strong educational background in business management. However, they may find that the theoretical knowledge they learned in school does not always translate well to the real world resulting in poor decision making.

Another challenge is a lack of promotion and advertisement. Many startups do not have the budget to invest in traditional advertising methods, such as television, radio, and print. Additionally, the Ethiopian market is relatively new to the startup ecosystem, and many people are not aware of the different startups that exist.

Moreover, the Ethiopian government is supportive of the program but has not yet developed a comprehensive set of policies and programs to support startups. This can make it difficult for startups to access financing, training, and other resources they need to succeed.

Despite the challenges that startups face in Ethiopia, there are a number of opportunities for their development in the country. One opportunity is the growing demand for consumer goods and services. Ethiopia has a population of over 110 million people, and the country's economy is growing rapidly. This is creating a growing demand for a wide range of consumer goods and services, including food and beverages, clothing, electronics, and entertainment.

Another opportunity for startups in Ethiopia is the country's growing infrastructure sector. The Ethiopian government is investing heavily in infrastructure development, such as roads, bridges, and power plants. This is creating opportunities for startups in a variety of sectors, including construction, engineering, and transportation.

Finally, the Ethiopian government is also supportive of startups. The government has launched a number of initiatives to support startups, such as providing access to financing and training. The government is also working to improve the regulatory environment for startups.

There are a number of things that startups can do to increase their chances of success. One important step is to develop a strong financial management plan. This plan should include a clear understanding of the startup's revenue and expense streams, as well as a budget for each area of the business. Startups should also regularly review their financial performance and make adjustments to their budget as needed.

Another important step is to develop and implement effective management systems. These systems should cover all areas of the business, including operations, marketing, and sales. Startups should also make sure that their employees are properly trained on how to use these systems.

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



The Ethiopian Herald

Established in 1943

Published daily except Mondays
By The Ethiopian Press Agency

Office of the CEO

Tel. 011-126-42-22

Fax. 251-011-156-98-62

email- epa@press.et

Advertisement and Dist.

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The Ethiopian Herald

Business & Economy



Harnessing the potential of irrigated wheat

BY ABEBE WOLDEGIORGIS

Ethiopia is endowed with abundant natural resources such as vast arable land, seasonal rain, surface and underground water and huge labor with diversified agro-ecological zones suitable for the cultivation of various crops.

Agriculture is the mainstay of the economy and the means of living for more than 80 % of the population and contributes 79% for the nation's foreign currency earning. To maximize the contribution of the sector to the economy, modernizing the farming system through utilizing various techniques, including irrigation, is essential.

The recent venture to produce dry-season irrigated wheat farm proved that Ethiopia can attain food self-sufficiency and garner foreign currency through exporting agricultural products.

The Ministry of Agriculture has been striving to raise wheat production and productivity since 2019. Wheat represents the fourth largely cultivated crop next to Teff, corn and sorghum. The Ministry targets to increase the volume of wheat produce and to substitute the importation of wheat.

Daniel Muleta (PhD) is working as a project coordinator in the irrigated-wheat farm at the Ethiopian Agricultural Research Institute (EARI).

As to him, the country has scored glittering success during the rainy season which accounts cultivating wheat ranging from 1.8 to 2 million hectares. Costantinos Berhutesfa, (PhD) a lecturer at AAU, Department of Economics, on his part told a local media that the importation of food products costs the nation staggering amount of money and recently the government has spent 700 million Dollars for importation of food to supply as aid to the drought affected people in various parts of the country.

In precise terms, the country has tried to boost wheat production starting from the Imperial

era in the then Arsi and Bale provinces but currently, zones of the Oromia region which was scaled up in Wolaita. Hence, taking the lesson from the chronology, Ethiopia would have the potential to be one of the leading countries in Sub Saharan African countries in wheat production.

Feto Etamo (PhD) is the General Director of the Ethiopian Agricultural Research Institute. As to him, wheat was the major crop that the nation imports. During the last 10 years, in Ethiopia, the consumption culture of wheat products has been growing so as the demand for wheat also has been increasing. Therefore, to meet the demand, the government has given due emphasis for dry wheat production.

He further said that when wheat irrigation farm was began five years ago, many called it as low land wheat production. But as time passed, based on other countries' experience, the practice of wheat irrigation has been expanded in Awash, Omo, the Southern Omo basins, Affar and Somali regions particularly in the Gode areas of Wabi-Shebele Basin. Currently, the achievement is getting scaled up nationwide.

In order to enhance irrigated wheat production, the Ethiopian Agricultural Research Institute conducted various research works. Studies indicate that there is a need to devise direction in how the nation could be surplus producer of wheat and self sufficient.

He also said that the government's strategy for enhancing wheat production lies on four pillars. The first one is increasing production and productivity on the land parts of the country which are already cultivated through increasing the utilization of inputs. Secondly, by identifying vast land in the low land parts of the country where water is available in the nearest area.

The third one is farming in the wet lands where clay soil is sufficiently available. The fourth one is in the place where the land is

the rainy season water.

Assuming that the product is 35 quintals of wheat per hectare, the total yield will be 50 million quintals during the harvest season. As to Feto, in Ethiopia, per capita wheat consumption is 0.7 quintals and when it is multiplied with the number of the total population, total per capita consumption will reach to 77 million quintals. But currently, the nation produces 50 to 55 million quintals of wheat annually.

It is obvious that the nation has abundant natural resources such as sufficient land, fertile soil, and favorable weather condition, rivers which flow throughout the year. Therefore, it is possible to double wheat production by exploiting these resources so that wheat production to be exported will also get increased.

The government intends to conduct wheat cultivation three times a year. Indeed, if some challenges witnessed in the wheat farm projects are addressed, accomplishing the plan can be possible.

Recently, the Ministry of Agriculture announced that more than 50 million quintals of wheat has been harvested during the current fiscal year on 1.4 million hectares of land through the nation's irrigation initiative.

Public Relations and Communications Executive Officer at the Ministry, Kebede Lakew told local media that the irrigated wheat development was initiated by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed. Citing the ample potential of land and water in the Afar region and other low land parts of the country, he said that the Ministry has been working in collaboration with pertinent stakeholders based on the direction given from the Head of the Government.

Scaling up best practices of Afar, concurrently, Kebede unveiled that now; irrigated wheat is being developed on three million hectares of land.

To maximize the contribution of the sector to the economy, modernizing the farming system through utilizing various techniques, including irrigation, is essential

affected by alkaline substances through treating the soil. And if the practice is fully scaled up attaining food self-sufficiency will be reached.

Five years ago, when wheat farm was introduced through irrigation, it was implemented in 3,500 hectares of land and in the following year it was grown up to 20,000 hectares of land which then able to be promoted to 200,000 hectares of land.

In the initial phase, 88 % of the cultivation was implemented in Oromia State, 40,000 hectares of land is cultivated in Amhara region; 7,500 hectares of land in Afar region and 5,000 hectares of land in the then Southern State and 157 hectares of land in Sidama region. It is proved that Sidama has huge potential to produce summer irrigation wheat farm.

In the second round, in addition to irrigation, 257,800 hectares of land in the Oromia region; and 28,000 hectares of land in Amhara region was cultivated by using

Art & Culture

Never-ending, amazing Ethiopian Coffee Discovery's saga

BY MULUGETA GUDETA

The forest-covered hills of Abyssinia loomed large in the distance. The fogs covered the tips of the hills and looked like half-naked and motionless giants that were tossed down from the sky by an invisible hand. At the foot of the hills laid a thick carpet of greenery that stops at one side of the small village before it continued on the other side.

Soon, night fell on the immense horizon casting dark clouds that slowly engulfed the entire area from the hills to the village which consisted of sparsely built huts where people took shelters after long days of wanderings in the forest in search of food and firewood.

Kaldi, the boy shepherd, ossed and turned on the mat laid down on the ground. The images of goats running helter-skelter gripped his mind. He could not fathom as to why the animals had behaved in such an unusual way on the green field where various plants, grass and shrubs provided them with food. It was not however clear where they got the energy to scamper here and there with unusual gait. This was what kept Kaldi awake that evening.

His thoughts jumped from the goats to the field and then to the shrubs and back to the goats that he struggled with the idea of telling his mother about his experience with the goats. Yet, he was afraid that he would be a laughing stoke of the adults or ridiculed by all the mothers in the village and by the children of his age who might take his tale akin to ghost stories about creatures that do not exist in reality but sometimes appear in the dark to frighten children like him. The only difference is that he saw the dancing goats in daylight while ghosts presumably appeared in the dark and their stories were made up and told in the evening...

The above passage is an excerpt from a short story about the discovery of coffee in Ethiopia by a boy name Kaldi. This extract gives a short background and the setting for the story and the name of the main character, a boy named Kaldi (not Kaldis) who lived in a village of herders (mainly goats) one day bumped into the magic shrub that later on became a world famous and most popular beverage that is continuing to baffle the popular mind as new discoveries hit the headlines and the scientific community is regularly coming up with new surprises about this fascinating bean. The story is entitled, ("Discovery Boy").

It is an established practice in Western literary or artistic culture, to write books or make films about something that has radically changed human culture or the way of life of communities. This is because the discoveries give inspiration to new generations of researchers or entrepreneurs and provide information on how something was discovered accidentally before it became a national passion that captures its imagination the way myths and legends do. The story of the discovery of coffee can



indeed be considered as something akin to myth, legend and saga all combined in one.

However, the modern saga of coffee reads less like a myth and more like a carefully woven expression of scientific reality. The true story of coffee is of course a never-ending tale in which science has occupied a predominant importance. Since its birth in the southern highlands of Ethiopia, at a place called Kaffa and subsequently lend, its name to the magical bean, coffee has been considered a fascination, and good and bad habit, a healing potion, and more recently, a potent remedy against a good number of diseases or illnesses.

In our hectic and high speed modern culture, work-related stress has become one of the major causes of cardiovascular and other diseases. Although the pace with which modern drugs are invented and distributed keeps pace with the disastrous effects of diseases, traditional foods and beverages are fighting for more space and acceptance by the pharmaceutical industry. Recent developments in this area tend to favor traditional foods and beverage over modern drugs with their devastating side effects and unknown long term consequences.

Among the traditional beverages that have long attracted the attention of the scientific community as well as direct users, coffee stands out as the favorite. From doubts about its potency in some cases as a relief to long unknown physical and mental health challenges, coffee has now grown into a 'drug of choice' for many patients who either abhor tablets or injections or have lost hope in the so-called modern medicines that may prolong life but at high cost to lifestyle choices. Many modern drugs tend to put limits to our food consumption patterns and preferences. On the contrary beverages like coffee, turmeric, ginger, lemon juice, are fast becoming the drugs of choice by a growing community of patients tired and sick of swallowing pills multiple times a day or taking daily doses of injections.

According to an April 16th information available on Google media, and entitled, "Genome Study Reveals Prehistoric Origin of Ethiopian Coffee" written by will Dunham, "which posted by Reuters news outlet, "you might call it Joe, java, mud, brew, mocha or your morning jolt. Coffee is undoubtedly a big part of global culture and the kind made from the Arabica bean is the most appreciated by coffee drinkers.

Kaldi's soul must enjoy and be happy with this latest piece of news because it at least corroborates the fact that his discovery took place in Ethiopia. This is because there are many places in the world that claim the mantle of "originators" or give tentative settings for the discovery of coffee. However, most of the pretenders do not provide scientific data to base their claims on. Ethiopia is definitively the source and origin of coffee. This is bound to lay the dispute to rest definitively.

Researchers have now unlocked the genome of the Arabica species and traced its origins to a natural mating between two other coffee species an estimated 610 000 to one million years ago in the forests of Ethiopia. That makes the species older than our own species Homo Sapiens which arose in Africa about 300 000 years ago."

According to another story by the same platform, entitled, "Five Health Benefits of Black Coffee", black coffee is packed with anti-oxidants, enhances cognitive function, supports liver health, boosts metabolism, and leads to lower risk of type two diabetes. The details are staggering and scientifically supported although doctors hardly prescribe black coffee as an ordinary medicine like aspirin or any other pain killer.

In this article, we put particular emphasis on black coffee remedial benefits in the case of stress and stress-related illnesses. Black coffee is recognized as stress reliever. "Coffee is a magical drink that may help you to relax from your stress and tension. A cup of black coffee may instantly boost your mood and make things better. It may stimulate

the nervous system and help to increase the neurotransmitters such as dopamine and serotonin."

If you ask which coffee is best for stress? The answer is, "If you are someone who gets jittery or anxious when you consume caffeine, then decaf coffee might be right for you. There is no reason to put your body through all that anxiety if you can get natural energy from our decaf with benefits. Keep calm and sip on." Another source adds more benefits of drinking black coffee such as, living longer, your body processing glucose better; you are less likely to develop heart failure, less likely to develop Parkinson's disease, is good for liver health and gives strong DNA.

Black coffee may be an excellence source for stress relief but it is not full-proof of negative consequences. This is particularly true with people who consume high amounts of black coffee every day. "Low to moderate doses of caffeine (50-300 mg) may cause increased alertness, energy and ability to concentrate while higher doses may have negative effects such as anxiety, restlessness, insomnia and increased heart rate."

Drinking coffee closer to bedtime is particularly inadvisable as it might adversely affect your circadian rhythm, that is to say the time of sleep and wakefulness. Black coffee is believed to stay a long time in our blood stream, up to 10 hours and drinking it late in the afternoon is most likely to keep you awake for long hours if not all night.

The story of coffee continues to be written and adding more excitement and suspense to the initial Kaldi's tale of discovery. From a simple morning ritual coffee drinking has now become, a huge industry, an object of scientific inquiry and a potent remedy against so many illnesses. In the coming years, coffee is likely to emerge as a solution to many more ailments, and that would be the moment when Kaldi, the shepherd would toss and turn in his grave, not in anger but as an immortal discoverer worthy of a monument in his name.

Global Affairs

Making the global financial architecture work for Emerging Markets, Developing Countries (EMDEs)

PARIS, Apr 22, 2024 (IPS) - The world is facing multiple crises that must be tackled quickly, with innovative approaches and brave decisions. The global financial architecture is an area that needs reform and thinking outside the box. The system created 80 years ago is not able to deal with today's problems that range from climate change to pandemics, to increasing inequality, to conflict and fragility, to food insecurity and poverty.

The climate battle is being lost and the world is failing to achieve the Paris Agreement's goal of maintaining global warming at below 1.5°C. It is also off track for reaching the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). To achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement as well as the SDGs, the whole world (especially EMDEs) will need to accelerate investments for climate and for development. This represents a huge financing challenge for EMDEs (excluding China). According to the Independent High Level Expert Group on Climate Finance they will need to invest \$2.4 trillion a year by 2030 just for climate action, with total investments being around \$5.4 trillion of which \$1trillion will have to be externally financed.

The current global financial architecture is not delivering for the EMDEs: official development assistance (ODA) is too low, net private capital flows are negative, and EMDEs are facing debt sustainability problems. According to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) ODA in 2022 was \$204 billion, nowhere near the trillion that is needed. Moreover, the \$204 billion figure includes in-donor refugee costs of \$29.3 billion and assistance to Ukraine of \$16.1 billion. That is, actual ODA to the EMDEs, the so-called country programmable aid, was much less than \$200 billion. At the same time, private capital is leaving EMDEs. Calculations by Kharas and Rivard (2024) show that in 2022 net private capital flows to EMDEs was minus \$125 billion and that negative figure increased to minus \$193 billion in 2023. This is happening in the face of rising sovereign debt problems. According to the World Bank about half of the world's poorest countries are either in debt distress or are at high risk of debt distress. In some countries debt service costs are higher than the budgets for health and education.

In view of this situation the United Nation's Secretary General, (SG) (as well as many voices in the Global South) is calling for reforms of

multilateralism including the global financial architecture. The UN is organizing a Summit of the Future in September 2024 to discuss possible reforms and has issued a report entitled our Common Agenda with a companion policy brief on reforms of the global financial architecture. The Global Economy program at the Brookings Institution organized a series of roundtables to discuss the UN proposals, and issued its own report with a series of recommendations for reforming the global financial architecture. The recommendations cover: (1) the system's governance, (2) increasing financing for climate and development and dealing with unsustainable debt; (3) expanding the global financial safety net; and (4) reforming the international tax system. In the remainder in this blog, I shall summarize some of the recommendations pertaining to increasing financing for climate and the SDGs.

The first set of reforms to be considered concern increasing the lending capacity of the Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs). The G20 has been very active in this area and has supported several studies, the most recent ones are: a 2022 independent review of Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs) capital adequacy frameworks (CAF); a 2023 report on further MDBs reforms titled "The Triple Agenda"; and finally also in 2023 a Roadmap for the Implementation of the CAF Report. Implementation of the recommendations on the capital adequacy frameworks would increase MDBs lending capacity by \$196.5 billion and are on the road to implementation. In addition to those reforms, it will be necessary to increase the capital of the MDBs.

The G20 has called for a recycling of \$100 billion equivalent of the IMF's Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) to EMDEs through the MDBs. In 2021 the Fund injected \$650 billion worth of SDRs into the world economy to help countries deal with the economic fallout from the pandemic. Countries received SDRs in proportion to their IMF quotas. Thus, according to Georgieva et al (2023) rich countries, who already had sufficient reserves received \$350 billions of additional liquidity which they did not need; and therefore it sits "dormant". An initial recycling of SDRs has occurred through the IMF's Poverty Reduction and Growth Trust (PRGT) and the Resilience and Sustainability Trust (RST). But so far, no recycling has been done through the MDBs; even though (unlike the PRGT and the RST) the MDBs are able to leverage the

recycled SDRs. Using the ratios in the G20's Triple Agenda Report recycling \$100 billion of SDRs as hybrid MDB capital would raise a total of \$1.5 trillion of additional financing, \$700 billion in direct lending and \$800 billion in indirect private financing.

Increasing the lending capacity of the MDBs is important but will not be enough to meet all the financing requirements for climate action. There is a need to distinguish between climate investments that are national public goods (adaptation and loss and damage estimated to require \$600 billion/year) that are also mostly financed by public resources; and mitigation which is a global public good that should be mostly financed by the private sector. Mitigation is estimated to require about \$1.8 trillion/year; about 1.5 trillion for the energy transition and \$300 billion for agriculture and natural capital. The existing system of MDBs could handle adaptation and loss and damage. But, as suggested by Ghanem (2023) a new institution, a Green Bank, which could be completely independent or could be part of the World Bank Group, is needed to finance mitigation. Green Bank would be different from existing MDBs because it would be a public-private partnership with private shareholders participating in its funding and governance. Moreover, it would only finance (through equity and loans) private sector climate mitigation projects.

There are many proposed reforms of the global financial architecture that are being discussed and debated. In this short blog I chose to focus on those that aim at increasing the system's ability to finance climate and development. These are key challenges that currently the international financial system appears unable to adequately address. Among the reforms presented here there is a consensus on the need to implement the CAF recommendations and they appear on their way. There is still resistance to the idea of recycling "dormant" SDRs through the MDBs and a decision on this issue has been postponed several times. The Green Bank proposal has not yet gained much traction as many people worry about the creation of another international organization. I would like to point out, though, that there are currently 62 multilateral climate funds that are only disbursing 3-4 billion dollars a year and that are not well coordinated. It would make sense to close most of those funds and replace them by one Green Bank that could mobilize private support and the trillions needed and be accountable for results.

(SOURCE: INTER PRESS SERVICE)

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The current global financial architecture is not delivering for the EMDEs: official development assistance (ODA) is too low, net private capital flows are negative, and EMDEs are facing debt sustainability problems

Law & Politics

Solid rationales behind Ethiopia's sea access quest

BY EYUEL KIFLU

In a significant development that holds immense significance for Ethiopia's economic growth and regional integration, the Ethiopian government has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Somaliland, granting Ethiopia access to the strategically located Gulf of Aden. This historic agreement opens up new avenues for trade, enhances Ethiopia's naval connectivity, and strengthens the longstanding ties between the two nations.

On January 1st, Ethiopia, a landlocked country for over three decades, signed a historic agreement to re-access the sea. The pact was signed between Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and Somaliland President Muse BihiAbdi. According to reports, this deal stipulates that Somaliland would lease 20 kilometres of its Gulf Eden coastline to Ethiopia.

The MoU with Somaliland marks a turning point in the nation's efforts to overcome this obstacle and diversify its trade routes. The land granted by Somaliland through a lease situated on the Gulf of Aden provides Ethiopia to establish a naval force that will improve the country's security as well as the region. The accord may also give the chance to Ethiopia with a direct link to global maritime trade networks, reducing dependence on neighbouring Djibouti and offering new opportunities for economic expansion. It is known that Ethiopia has been using the Port of Djibouti for about 95 % of its import export trade.

Through this partnership, Somaliland also aims to boost its own economic development and enhance regional integration. The port deal may increase trade and investment opportunities also the result from the agreement are expected to contribute to job creation and infrastructure development in the region.

International observers such as U.S. Special Envoy for the Sahel and Great Lakes Regions of Africa, American Political and Economic Analyst Lawrence Freeman, and others have welcomed the MoU, recognizing its potential to foster stability and economic growth in the Horn of Africa. The success of this partnership will not only strengthen bilateral relations but also serve as a model for regional cooperation and integration, inspiring other African nations to explore innovative solutions for their own development challenges.

With Ethiopia ready to gain access to the sea via Somaliland and Somaliland set to profit from increasing investment and commercial activity, this historic deal has the potential to change the region's economic landscape. As the two countries begin this new chapter of collaboration, the world waits in expectation, hoping that this breakthrough will usher in a future of shared prosperity and stability in the Horn of Africa.

However, following the signing of the agreement, different unwarranted statements have circulated here and there by various entities. It is painful to see statements that fail to acknowledge Ethiopia's contributions to the region, especially when statements come from those who were not present during Somalia's difficult times. So, it is important to note that Ethiopia's interest in accessing the sea comes from the desire for economic growth and ensuring the country's security.

Dareskedar Taye (PhD), a senior foreign relations expert at the Institute of Foreign Affairs (IFA), explained to *The Ethiopian Herald* that the signing of the MoU is part of Ethiopia's struggle to access a seaport. Depending on a single country's port creates security and economic burdens for Ethiopia, so it needs to break out of this geographical prison. Therefore, the country has been searching for different alternatives, but other countries have been unwilling to cooperate. Thus, Ethiopia signed the MoU.

The MoU provides Ethiopia with an alternative sea access, which helps in market pricing. When a country depends on a single port, the price is determined by the host country, whether it is high or low. Additionally, the partnership with Somaliland takes into account the former security issues, as new infrastructures will be built, enhancing people-to-people ties and expanding market options for exports.

However, there have been challenges from Somalia and other countries regarding the misinterpretation of Ethiopia's desire to access the sea. Addressing concerns raised by the Somali government, the expert emphasized the divergence between perceptions and realities surrounding the agreement. He stated that misinterpreting Ethiopia's pursuit of maritime access as a pretext for military aggression does not align with reality.

The agreement reaffirms Ethiopia's commitment to safeguarding its national

interests and combating insecurity in the volatile Horn of Africa region.

Dareskedar also criticized Somalia's alignment with anti-Ethiopia forces and urged cooperation over contentious areas. Detrimental alliances could exacerbate regional tensions, so it is important to rebuild constructive engagement in addressing shared challenges.

Ethiopia's pursuit to access the sea through the port deal with Somaliland reflects a strategic imperative driven by economic necessity and national security considerations. However, the agreement has sparked diplomatic tensions, underscoring the complex dynamics at play in the Horn of Africa, as explained by the researcher.

The initiative that Ethiopia's government has taken to access the sea is continuing, and it is expected to resolve the issue in this generation. Furthermore, if possible, the country is open to exploring different alternatives from its neighbours. After the Somaliland deal, different countries have expressed interest in discussing their own offers for Ethiopia, he added.

Following the Ethiopia-Somaliland accord, there have been plenty of comments both in support and criticism. However, the reality is that Ethiopia has been tirelessly working for regional integrity, and its contributions to the region, including for Somalia's peace, are unquestionable. As Ethiopia strives to access a seaport, all commenter parties should consider the country's contributions and should support the deal.

Recently, American Political and Economic Analyst Lawrence Freeman told *The Ethiopian Herald* that Ethiopia has been defending Somalia with its resources and troops, going back to early 2006, and they still continue to do so. Freeman emphasized that the idea of mobilizing a war against Ethiopia is baseless and dangerous, and he called for other countries to refrain from interfering in the Horn of Africa. He stressed the importance of studying physical economics and understanding that the agreement is beneficial to all nations in the region. Freeman advised moving forward with the agreement, as it will help the people and economies of all nations involved. He also urged a shift away from anger, historical grievances, and pettiness, and instead, focusing on the future and the potential for economic growth in the Horn of Africa and Eastern Africa, which largely depends on Ethiopia's economy.



It is important to note that Ethiopia's interest in accessing the sea comes from the desire for economic growth and ensuring the country's security

INTERNATIONAL News

Securing legal identity for all Africans is key to sustainable development

Development experts are calling for political support to accelerate investment in effective civil registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) systems that will give legal identity to all members of the population.

During a webinar on “Africa’s Progress Towards SDG Target 16.9: Legal Identity for All Including Birth Registration by 2030”, hosted by the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), experts revealed that despite progress in the development of CRVS systems in most African countries, the continent still faces challenges in reporting births and deaths.

Mr. Oliver Chinganya, the Director of the African Centre for Statistics (ACS), expressed concern that Africa is still lagging in providing up-to-date, accurate, and timely statistics on births and deaths on the continent. He highlighted the importance of statistics in formulating sound economic development policies and said that although Africa has made progress in the development and awareness of CRVS systems over the past ten years, challenges remain that need urgent action.

Mr. Chinganya emphasized the need for political support rather than mere political will, stating that anyone can have a will but political support requires action. He stressed the need for a commitment to meet the 2030 Agenda on sustainable development with just six years to the deadline.

In 2015, world leaders adopted the Sustainable Development Agenda, which included target 16.9 specifically focusing on providing legal identity for all, including birth registration,

by 2030. Target 17.9 calls for support in strengthening statistical capacity, including civil registration and vital statistics systems, to achieve 100% birth registration and 80% death registration.

A well-functioning CRVS system registers all births and deaths, issues birth and death certificates, and compiles and disseminates vital statistics, including the cause of death information.

Mr. William Muhwava, Chief of Demographic and Social Statistics at the African Centre for Statistics, called for political commitment to providing and adequately funding civil registration as a public good and service. He highlighted that although governments had policies supporting civil registration and the production of vital statistics, the enforcement of the laws was lax. This necessitated the need for member states to build institutional capacity among relevant ministries to scale up the delivery of legal documents.

“Communities should have access to information and knowledge about the availability and benefits of the service as we believe that if people see the value of the legal documents then the uptake will be quite high,” Mr. Muhwava noted.

Ms. Karin Heissler, UNICEF Regional Adviser on Child Protection for West and Central Africa, emphasized that every child has a right to be registered because, without legal identity, children are invisible and at risk of being stateless.

“In the demographic transitions taking place

across the globe and that the vast majority of the world population will be African in the coming years, it is very important that we continue to focus on birth registration and legal identity across the continent,” Ms. Heissler said, adding that more than half of unregistered children under the age of five live in East and Southern Africa.

A 2022 assessment report by UNICEF and ECA, A Statistical Update on Birth Registration in Africa, found that 20 countries in Africa are on track to achieve universal birth registration by 2030, while 23 countries need to accelerate progress.

Ms. Heissler said increased investment and results in immunization and institutional delivery of birth registration was an opportunity to boost registration levels. She called for the elimination of bottlenecks in registration such as discriminatory laws and practices, accessibility, and insufficient decentralization of services as well as their affordability.

Mr. Benson Droti, who heads the Health Information Systems team at the World Health Organization (WHO) Regional Office for Africa, said in his presentation at the webinar that many births and deaths in Africa remain unrecorded. He noted that a recent assessment by WHO found that about two-thirds of the countries in the African region have no information on death registration, cause of death certification, and quality of death certification, noting that these are worrying statistics. “African countries have a fundamental responsibility to develop and

strengthen their capabilities for birth and death reporting,” said Droti, highlighting that in Africa, there were big gaps in the capacity to correctly diagnose the cause of death.

On behalf of the member states, Josephine Mukesha, Director General of the National Identification Agency in Rwanda pointed out that the country experiences a challenge of limited funding for accelerating the implementation and maintenance of civil registration systems. She recommended increased financial and technical support coupled with country ownership of the systems for sustainability and a way for accelerating progress towards SDG targets.

Mr. Olivier Kadanga, Director General of the Civil Registration Division of Togo, highlighted the need to have a comprehensive assessment of the civil registration systems and a review of the civil registrations to facilitate the improvement of the civil registration system.

Ms. Henrietta Lamptey, Acting Registrar Births and Deaths Registry of Ghana affirmed that to accelerate progress towards SDG targets, the country needs to implement digital solutions and technologies in data collection to integrate systems while ensuring continuous capacity building and awareness creation. In addition, countries should develop and enforce robust policy frameworks and legal regulations to support the implementation and sustainability of CRVS systems, and those with outmoded CRVS laws and policies should take steps to amend them.

Source: UNECA

Planet Earth

The need for developing countries to advance in technology, AI to combat climate change

BY STAFF REPORTER

Peoples life in the 21st century is overwhelmed by the application of modern technology that aims to simplify living, get momentum in terms of time and labor, increase quality as well as solve problems. The application of technology and AI is also getting momentum in the prevention of the impacts of climate change.

But developing countries lag far behind in possessing advanced technologies including AI facilities. Furthermore, they are the primary victims of the global threat of climate change. Therefore, all forums and platforms need to give due attention to equipping Africa and other developing countries with the necessary technologies that can be of help for climate change prevention.

The recent launch of the UN-led AI Advisory Body advanced a growing global trend to harness machine learning to find solutions to common challenges, says a report by UNFCCC. AI is upping the data crunching game and a growing number of governments, businesses and civil society partners are working together to reap its many benefits.

That includes speeding up and scaling efforts to realize such global ambitions as the 2030 Agenda and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which serve as the world's blueprint to make the planet greener, cleaner and fairer.

Ahead of the latest UN Climate Change Conference (COP 28), which begins at the end of November in Dubai, UN News looks at how AI helps the world, from communities to corporations to law makers, tackle climate change:

AI-driven technologies offer previously unheard-of capabilities to process enormous volumes of data, extract insightful knowledge and improve predictive models, according to the UN's World Meteorological Organization (WMO).

That means improved modelling and predicting climate change patterns that can help communities and authorities to draft effective adaptation and mitigation strategies.

Several UN agencies support vulnerable communities in Burundi, Chad and Sudan through an AI-driven project to investigate past environmental change around displacement hotspots and deliver future projections to inform adaptation measures and anticipatory action for integration in humanitarian programming.

On the ground, enhanced data can be a game-changer. For instance, the MyAnga app helps Kenyan pastoralists brace for drought. With data from global meteorological stations and satellites sent



to their mobile phones, herders can plan ahead, better manage their livestock and save hours of scouting for green pastures. As extreme weather events unfold with more frequency and intensity, AI can help communities around the world to better brace for climate disasters.

AI-driven initiatives are targeting high-risk areas and feeding into local and national response plans. For areas susceptible to landslides, for example, mapping can help local authorities plan and implement sustainable development measures, reduce risks and ensure the safety of residents in vulnerable communities.

Related developments in AI and robotics were among the tools identified in a recent project led by WMO, UN Environment Programme (UNEP) and International Telecommunication Union (ITU). From enhancing accuracy in weather forecasts to reducing disaster risks, AI is already helping, according to WMO, which operates a disaster risk reduction programme and multi-hazard early warning system that serves countries, communities and humanitarian agencies.

Leveraging AI's benefits is also part of the UN Secretary-General's groundbreaking Early Warnings for All initiative. Launched earlier this year, the its action plan aims to ensure everyone on Earth is protected from hazardous weather, water or climate events through early warning systems by the end of 2027.

Ever wonder where urban air quality reports come from? Cities around the world already track pollution to alert the public in cases of dangerous levels.

Using AI, susceptibility maps can support

local governments in making decisions to improve public health and urban resilience. In addition, AI can improve urban planning as well as traffic and waste management, making cities more sustainable and liveable.

AI can revolutionize the world's approach to carbon neutrality and usher in an era of intelligent sustainability on a global scale at a time when the race is on to keep Earth from heating up to dangerous levels. As a critical catalyst in realizing global carbon neutrality goals, AI's algorithms have a key role to play in minimizing environmental impact and maximizing efficiency.

In terms of realizing the global goal for affordable and clean energy for all by 2030 (SDG 7), AI can optimize grids and increase the efficiency of renewable sources. Predictive maintenance using AI can also reduce downtime in energy production. That can mean reducing the planet's carbon footprint.

As an industry with a record of high emissions, fashion can benefit from AI-driven research and development to accelerate innovation. The \$2.4 trillion-dollar global industry that employs approximately 300 million people across the value chain, many of whom are women, and the scale of the industry is only expected to grow over the coming years.

Given its size and global reach, unsustainable practices within the fashion sector have important impacts on social and environmental development indicators, and without major changes to production processes and consumption patterns in fashion, the social and environmental costs of the sector will

continue to mount, according to the UN Alliance for Sustainable Fashion.

That's where AI can step in. Machine learning can optimize supply chains to reduce waste, monitor resource consumption and promote sustainable manufacturing processes. AI can help to accelerate the energy transition by optimizing savings and improving efficiency across energy-intensive sectors.

Likewise with agriculture, another emissions-heavy sector. It accounts for 22 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions, according to a UN climate assessment report, but AI-driven efforts can change that.

From corporations to small-scale farmers facing extreme weather events, water scarcity and land degradation, AI can help optimize their practices, reduce waste and minimize the environmental impact of food production. AI-driven smart grids can balance supply and demand, facilitating the integration of renewables into energy systems and reducing the reliance on fossil fuels.

This year's Science and Innovation Forum, held in mid-October, focused on climate action. Hosted by the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the week-long event showcased examples of technologies that aim to transform traditional practices into data-driven systems that protect people and the planet. Among them, AI and digital tools are pivotal in building climate-resilient agrifood systems that are more efficient, sustainable and adaptable to climate change challenges, according to the agency.