



The Ethiopian Herald

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Libyan PM on state visit to Ethiopia

BY STAFF REPORTER

ADDIS ABABA- Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) held talks yesterday with Libyan Prime Minister Abdul Hamid Al-Dabaiba.

In a message Premier Abiy conveyed on his social media page stated that the discussion focused on regional peace and stability, economic cooperation workforce exchange, and other areas of mutual interest.

Abiy said in his message, "I am pleased to welcome Prime Minister Abdul Hamid Al-Dabaiba of the State of Libya."

In a related development, Libyan Prime Minister laid a wreath at the Adwa Victory Memorial Museum.

According to information obtained from the Mayor's Office, the Prime Minister expressed his delight over visiting the Museum, which is according to him, is the pride of all Africans.



Council reaffirms commitment to ensuring durable peace

BY ASHENAFI ANIMUT

ADDIS ABABA – Through a determined political commitment and conflict resolution mechanisms, the incumbent has been endeavoring towards ensuring peace and security across the country, the National Security Council said

In its statement issued on Wednesday in connection with the current security situation in the country, the Council stated that the government has been working to form viable policies and to use mechanisms including Transitional Justice(TJ) and accords among others to ensure

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Ambassador George M. Orina

Ethiopia, Kenya rolling up sleeves to invigorate trade ties

• Plan to channel illegal trade to formal channel

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

ADDIS ABABA –Ethiopia and Kenya have been hugely investing to create a seamless flow of goods and curtail irregularities in Moyale's one-stop border post that would invigorate their trade ties, the country's ambassador said.

In an exclusive interview with *The Ethiopian Herald*, Kenya Ambassador to Ethiopia George M. Orina stated that the two countries investment in one-stop border post areas is an important move to

See Ethiopia, Kenya ... page 3

EU Chamber's Policy Brief advocates reformed tax env't

• Ethiopia evaluates Chamber's recommendations

BY EYUEL KIFLU

ADDIS ABABA - The European Chamber issued yesterday a Policy brief titled 'Enhancing Tax Administration' that advocated reformed tax environment to address the EU private sector's challenges in Ethiopia.

During his keynote address, EU Ambassador to Ethiopia Roland Kobia emphasized that the policy brief benefits not only EU companies but also international and domestic firms by alleviating challenges they have faced so far.

Ambassador Kobia also underscored the issue of tax unpredictability as a significant obstacle for EU investors in Ethiopia, along with security concerns.

The document proposes recommendations to address tax-related issues, with a particular emphasis on improving predictability, addressing misinterpretation of laws, and enhancing auditing procedures for corporations, he elaborated.

"Notably, the policy brief highlights key challenges arising from inconsistencies in tax directives issued by various government agencies, including the Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Revenues, and the Ethiopian Investment Commission. These inconsistencies have resulted in confusion for taxpayers."



Additionally, repetitive audits and inconsistent assessment techniques have led to unpredictable outcomes in tax cases.

The Ethiopian Investment Commissioner Hanna Areyaslassie stated in a media briefing that the commission is working towards resolving the challenges faced by domestic and foreign investors by engaging with various government agencies.

According to the commissioner, the investors' concerns are being addressed both immediately and gradually. "Immediate solutions are sought through negotiations with federal and state stakeholders, while long-term problems require sustained

efforts."

Regarding the policy briefs and recommendations, Hanna explained that they are evaluated in alignment with government policy. Over the past five years, significant improvements have been made to facilitate the ease of doing business in the country that makes Ethiopia a preferred investment destination in Africa.

"The Policy Brief advocates for a reformed tax environment in Ethiopia. To achieve this, close collaboration between the Ministry of Finance and relevant agencies

See EU Chamber's Policy ... page 3



IGNITE, consortium launch gender education project

BY STAFF REPORTER

ADDIS ABABA-The Inspiring Girls and Grassroots Networks for Inclusive and Transformative Education (IGNITE) launched a gender education project in five African countries including Ethiopia on Wednesday.

The project is to be implemented by the consortium comprising the International Rescue Committee (IRC), Urgent Action Fund and the Partnership for African Social and Governance Research (PASGR).

Urgent Action Fund Africa Learning, Monitoring and Evaluation Officer Hiwot Tedla told The Ethiopian Herald that the project will be implemented in Ethiopia, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and Nigeria where gender inequality puts women and girls' lives at risk.

The project helps feminist Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to advance the education and empowerment of marginalized adolescent girls, using sustainable, local approaches to help change the social norms that prevent them from accessing inclusive and quality education, Hiwot added.

The project also seeks to promote gender equality education and stop violence against women and girls.

"The IGNITE project prioritizes inclusive funding, tailored capacity-building, and collaborative partnerships that truly value and nurture the expertise of grassroots organizations."

The officer added, "Conflict and instability in different countries escalate gender-based violence. Thus, advancing adolescent girls' education is fundamental to solve women's challenges sustainably."

Moreover, it is important to work on identifying the root causes of gender-based violence to transform the mindset of the community, she remarked.

It was learned that out of the 86 CSOs applications that were received from the five target countries, funding will be given to 60 qualified organizations to implement the project.

ACSOs foresee better future in Ethiopia's BRICS accession

BY YESUF ENDRIS

ADDIS ABABA- Authority for Civil Society Organizations and Russian BRICS Experts Council yesterday discussed possible cooperation areas under BRICS Civil Forum among member countries' civil society organizations.

Speaking at the discussion, [Ethiopian] Authority for Civil Society Organizations Deputy General Director, Fasikaw Molla said that the BRICS Civil Forum is important for Ethiopia. The Ethiopian government has been reforming the Civil Society sector for the last four or five years. And, the civil Society originations are engaging in several developmental and democratization processes. Both Ethiopian and Russian representatives described their optimism under BRICS framework.

"We need more partner at this moment... [] BRICS will be an alternative partner for building vibrant in thriving Civil Society Organization sector in Ethiopia. I hope BRICS is a complementary to the traditional alternatives of Intergovernmental cooperationists. This will definitely bring up ample benefits and opportunities to CSOs in Ethiopia," he said.

Ethiopia has a strong belief that the forum will be a platform to enhance constructive dialogue



between CSOs of BRICS member countries on the wide range of social economic issues. The platform will help Ethiopia to improve coordination among CSOs, he noted.

He said, "It will advance BRICS people to people cooperation for the benefit of our people. So, we consider this platform as strategic and very important. The Ethiopian Civil Society Organizations and stakeholders are committed and proactive to a constructive and mutually complementary cooperation under the BRICS Civil Forum."

Head of BRICS Experts Council-Russia,

Victoria Panova (PhD), said that Ethiopia's membership in BRICS is not just the right choice but also a strategic step that allows talking about new heights in political economic, humanitarian development. Joining forces and efforts together with our 10 countries in order to reach better world; I think this is very important.

More than 40 countries have the desire to join BRICS. It is significantly playing in economic, peace, security and political affair. Ethiopia, as a second fastest growing economy in BRICS, will have active role that can simulate the BRICS developmental path, according to her.

Ethio-telecom launches nationwide Digital ID registration

• Signs agreement with National ID Project Office

BY MESERET BEHAILU

ADDIS ABABA – Ethio telecom launched the national digital ID registration in 29 cities across the country on Wednesday.

The company hosted the event under the theme, "Digital Identity to foster an inclusive digital economy" aiming at creating enabled environment for citizens.

Upon the launching ceremony, Ethio-telecom CEO, Frehiwot Tamiru said that the company has been carrying out various activities such as establishing infrastructure in a bid to realize digital Ethiopia 2025.

As to her, the company focuses on four pillars namely connectivity, enabling system (ID), security, and ecosystem (people centered knowledge) to drive nation aspire to digital system.

She further stated that the nation planned to attain 90 million digital ID in the coming two years. Of this, 32 million ID (36%) will be covered by the company.

Currently, the company has 949 locality service centers established and 1200 kits imported used for registration purpose. In this regard, citizens who are aged from five and citizens of the nation would benefit from national ID service, she noted.

"Improving service accessibility, ensuring trustworthiness between market actors and customers, leading the national economy with information based, combating fraud, and leading modern life are among the significances of the program," she added.

National ID Project Office Coordinator, Yodahe Arayaselassie on his part said that so far merely 4.6 million citizens have been utilized digital



ID. It means that the number of citizens who are exploiting national ID is small compared with that of the huge population the country houses.

"The nationwide Digital ID registration is the historical event because it will benefit 40 % of Ethiopian people who are non-documented. The Effort of Ethio-telecom towards realizing Digital Ethiopia through providing different devices is worth appreciating," he noted.

Yodahe also underlined that the launching of the national ID would play significant role for benefiting entrepreneurs, ordinary citizens, novel startups, and the likes through ensuring traceability and scale upping loan for citizens.

It was to be recalled that Ethio-telecom has some 77.4 million customers. Of this total number of customers, 44.5 million of them are tele birr users across the nation.

News

Experts spotlight ways to expedite food tourism

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

ADDIS ABABA- Documenting the nutritional values of the cultural cuisines and exploiting its medicinal role must be a priority area to enhance the nation's tourism sector, experts in the area said.

Speaking to the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA), Hotel Management Instructor and Researcher Habtu Tekla, indicated that food tourism is untapped in Ethiopia while many countries are benefiting from the sector which is showing from 7 to 12% growth annually.

"Ethiopia is a big country with plenty of cultural cuisines across the country. Let alone the traditional equipment food is served with and how it is served, but its nutritional content coupled with its organic value and mouthwatering feature makes it preferable."

However, little has been achieved when it comes to promoting the cultural cuisines on international websites and blogs. Moreover, there is a huge gap in organizing workshops, festivals as well as using short videos which best work to introduce the foods, as to him.

It is important to note that tourists travel globally just to have a taste of unique foods across countries. Accordingly, the nation still has a chance of gaining the socioeconomic benefit if it takes the promotion activities seriously, he emphasized.

Though tourists never get tired of admiring Ethiopian cultural cuisines such as Doro wot, Shiro wot, injera, kitfo including the coffee ceremony, due to inadequate information they have, there are times where tourists packed food from their country.



Tour operators, on one hand, have a tendency of taking visitors to luxurious restaurants only. Thus, besides providing adequate information using various platforms, tour operators need to develop a habit of taking tourists to different areas where they could get a variety taste of cultural foods, he emphasized.

Thus, documenting the nutritional values of the cultural cuisines through Chief's Association is vital. More importantly, the medicinal role of the cuisines must also be another area of focus, he stressed.

On the other hand, allowing the tourists firsthand experience in the cooking will have additional value to the promotion. To exemplify, he shared the experience in Semen Mountains where tourists are allowed to make injera.

Similarly in the Dorze area, tourists take part in preparation of false bananas. He indicated that participating tourists in the process not only makes their stay memorable but it would also encourage them to visit and explore more again.

Lessons need to be drawn from countries like Italy which prepared a food tourism map. China has also built a museum which showcases its tea ceremony. Ethiopia could also establish a food museum given its huge variety.

Deputy Director of Tourism Training Institute, Training Sector, Habtamu Kiberet, on his part mentioned that the nation has not given the necessary attention to food tourism.

Ethiopia has more than 80 nations and nationalities that have different cultural cuisines. Nonetheless, with the little attention

given to marketing indigenous knowledge, the cultural foods were not able to generate income for the country.

Thus, he stressed the need to document the traditional cuisines without losing natural and nutritional content and transfer it to the coming generation. It is also pivotal to link it in the market so that tourists could easily get the ingredients/recipe and make it themselves.

The institute has so far documented traditional cuisines recipe of Sidama, Selite, Harari, Gamo, and Dire Dawa. Apart from promoting eco-tourism, it would allow the destinations where tourists could easily make the foods that are made in the area.

He added that efforts are being put to document Gambella, Benishangul, Afar, and Somali cultural cuisines.

Council reaffirms...

peace and security to address peace and security issues.

According to the statement, the government assigned various neutral and senior experts in the area to facilitate the peace restoration process.

Citing the country's different historical injustice, human rights disputes and other negative narratives, it said that the government has been introducing the TJ mechanism in a bid to resolve such issues for once and good.

"This TJ legal framework has embraced stakeholders that have with international experiences in the area with the view of ensuring lasting peace, reconciliation, justice and developing vibrant democratic culture nationwide," the statement stated.

As to the statement, during the preliminary

TJ process, about 60 regional and 20 national agenda collection forums were conducted.

The statement emphasized that TJ is the only way to address the current pressing issues and the body is established based on the international standards and practices. Accordingly, the government is committed enough to implement all the inconveniences as per the policy framework.

Mentioning the sincere determination of the government on the Pretoria agreement of Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (CoHA) implementation virtues to the coming generation, it remarked that the leadership has managed to rescue the potential conflicts and bloodshed.

Currently, rehabilitation and reconciliation activities are being undertaken in Amhara,

Afar and Tigray states, it added.

Since the reached Pretoria accord, it said the government has been discharging its responsibilities, taking legal measures to sustain the agreement and providing chains of humanitarian support consistently to Tigray state.

Furthermore, the government has been disbursing a huge amount of investment to infrastructure reconstruction developments, services and expediting financial and economic activities, the statement added.

Urging some armed groups to act in accordance with the Pretoria agreement, the statement states that it is highly critical to correct the prior national problems and strengthen peaceful political undertakings to withstand the current conflicts and challenges.

EU Chamber's Policy...

is essential to ensure the issuance of clear and consistent tax directives."

The commissioner further highlighted that standardized audit programs, accompanied by industry-specific manuals, are crucial, and auditors should receive comprehensive training.

Involving taxpayers in shaping standards that accurately reflect industry realities and implementing a system that ranks taxpayers based on their compliance and provides fast-track services would further strengthen the tax administration system, she remarked.

Ethiopia, Kenya ...

foster their business-to-business ties. In the long run, the move would contribute to ease contraband and other illegal activities.

Compared with the two countries' longstanding cordial relations and their warm neighborliness, their trade exchange has not been reached at the desired level.

Last February, Ethiopia and Kenya reached an agreement to utilize the opportunity to increase the volume of their annual trade as

it has a huge potential to improve. To this, both countries have deployed their business communities to explore the opportunities to enhance the commercial ties, he added.

"We plan to capitalize the illegal trade in the border areas as an opportunity and to channel the activities to the legal route. In this regard, the two governments are working to establish a framework that allows the transition of informal trade

to the formal channel in a bid to bring a significant increment in the annual trade volume."

Ambassador M. Orina further highlighted that owing to the planned measure, illegal trade in the border areas will be lessened and the two governments are determined to address bottlenecks and remove restrictions and incentivize those who will follow the legal channels.

Moreover, strengthening partnership and business-to-business relations would increase the volume of trade and investment between the two countries and ensure their mutual benefits.

Hence, due attention has been given to enhance the taxation system and address the issue of standards, infrastructure and bureaucratic setbacks and other bottlenecks to improve trading volume, he remarked.

Opinion

Why Ethiopia green lighted foreign investors on restricted trade areas?

BY MENGESHA AMARE

Recognizing the fact that foreign investment is integral to the Ethiopian economy, the government has torched green light for foreign investors' engagement in restricted trade sectors. As an open, well-regulated economy with a highly skilled workforce, Ethiopia has planned to enjoy employing an international reputation for innovation. To make the most of these advantages, the country uses international capital to supplement domestic savings.

Foreign investment helps Ethiopia reach its economic potential by providing capital to finance new industries and enhance existing industries, boosting infrastructure and productivity and creating employment opportunities in the process.

The higher growth supported by foreign investment pays dividends for all Ethiopians by increasing tax revenues to the federal and state governments, and increasing the funds available to spend on hospitals, schools, roads and other essential services and indispensable infrastructure.

Of course, foreign investment has other benefits beyond injecting new capital. By bringing in new businesses with connections in different markets, it opens up additional export opportunities, boosting overall export performance. It also encourages competition and increased innovation by bringing new technologies and services to the Ethiopian market.

As a resource rich country with a relatively high demand for capital and a huge population, foreign investment fills the gap between what Ethiopia saves and invests every year. Total investment is usually funded by a combination of domestic savings and foreign investment.

With foreign investment, Ethiopia would be able to back its economy and would have fewer funds available to spend on hospitals, schools, roads and other government services.

Having all these benefits in kind, the government has opened up export, import, wholesale and retail trade businesses to foreign companies to boost competitiveness, revenues. That is why the country has opened this previously restricted sector for foreign investors to boost businesses competitiveness.

Earlier, these sectors were reserved only for indigenous businesses to protect local investors and foreign investors can now engage in all import, export, wholesale and retail trade investments with an exception on fertilizer and petroleum.

The opening of these sectors for foreign investors would bring advantages for customers, suppliers and others, boost competitiveness, improve government revenue and others, indeed!

The government of Ethiopia recently introduced a new regulation and rules which allow foreign companies to engage in whole sale and retail trade in the country.

This is a very inviting green light to do so. Sectors previously reserved to the local investors are now step by step opened to the foreigners and the scheme is expected to improve the trade and transaction system of the country. The regulation also opens the door to foreign businessmen to engage in import and export trade.

Such a bold move would help the nation resolve the problems pervasive in the trade value chain in the country, supports the enhancement of legitimate trade, and stabilizes inflation.

The government has supported local industries and opened the market to foreign companies so that the business relied more on competition rather than subsidy. True, the investment could hardly bear fruits within the shortest time possible unless the business is supported by foreign actors. As the wholesale and retail business is currently monopolized by few local companies, opening the sector to foreigners should be taken as a way out as it is instrumental in making the sector competent.

Yes, allowing foreign companies to do business is essential, but it is quite useful to inspect them when they carry out their business and closely follow up if the process goes in line with the rules and regulation introduced by the government.

The good thing here is the government has been providing traders and investors with incentive and protection so as to help them engage in various sectors such as import, export, wholesale and retail trades. Nevertheless, some argue that the incoming of foreign investors to engage in whole sale and retail trade might bring pressure on local dealers. Hand in hand with inviting foreign companies to engage in whole sale and retail trade governing system, making the Dollar-Birr exchange rate similar to the parallel market is essential for it would be quite difficult to bring about the intended target without implementing such a bold step.

Unequivocally, foreign direct investments are one of the driving forces of the process of globalization and are a defining element of the modern-day world economy. They promote the restructuring of industry at the regional and global levels and thus ensure the integration of a national economy into the world economy more effectively than trade. They also stimulate economic growth and development, providing economies in transition with not only financing for development, but also new technologies, better management techniques and access to regional, continental or international markets. In such a way, these investments can play a key role in the development of transition economies and in their rapid integration into the world community.

Since most of the economies in transition have resumed growth, made considerable progress in structural and institutional reforms, and achieved macroeconomic stability, the influx of foreign investments

into these countries is growing significantly.

The growing competition for foreign investments is certain to have an impact on the course of economic development of economies in transition and will encourage the pursuit of continued reforms to improve the investment climate and attract greater foreign investment. Yes, the combination of such factors as the presence of strategic resources, highly educated populations, highly skilled workers available at low cost, comparatively well-developed infrastructure and social-welfare sectors, and proximity to the continental market. Here agreements on investment protection take precedence over the countries' national foreign investment laws.

Therefore, in order to effectively solicit foreign investment in the future, economies in transition must simplify their registration procedures, reduce price controls to a minimum, dismantle trade barriers, foster favorable conditions for private sector development, put an end to bureaucratic interference, strengthen financial institutions and banking supervision, create a commercially oriented infrastructure, and give foreign investors a greater opportunity to participate in privatization.

The low level of foreign participation in enterprise privatization is one of the main shortcomings of the privatization programs of most of the transition economies. One of the causes of the low level of foreign participation in privatization is the fact that transition economies have insufficient expertise in attracting foreign investors. Multilateral financial institutions and international development agencies can play an important role in attracting foreign investment in transition economies.

Efforts to attract foreign investments in transition economies like ours are also likely to be promoted by new initiatives being undertaken by the provision of guarantees for foreign investments and programs for direct investment in small businesses. These innovative tools have great potential from the standpoint of their effectiveness and flexibility and should therefore be introduced in transition economies as quickly as possible.

The investment policy in Ethiopia enables foreign investors to concentrate all their attention on the implementation of government policy on attracting foreign investment. Needless to say, as the funds the government has allocated for the growth and development are not enough to mount a full-scale effort to solicit local investment, the involvement of foreign investors in various sectors is timely and quite acceptable.

Therefore, investment promotion agencies should base their activities on the effective use of information technologies and new program tools.

The enterprises themselves cannot afford the services of foreign consultants, while local consultants are in short supply in the transition economies. In this regard,

it is vital that greater numbers of local consultants be trained with the help of international financial institutions and that steps be taken to involve them in the implementation of promising investment projects.

A system of incentives and tax concessions for investments is of great importance to foreign investors. In order to attract foreign investors, incentives must be automatic and free of bureaucratic obstacles. By simplifying incentives and making them automatic for all investors acting within the framework of tax and customs legislation, economies in transition could make their investment climates more attractive.

Tax concessions for investments have demonstrated their effectiveness in many of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries, making it possible to write off investment expenses expeditiously and offering investors long-term arrangements. Foreign investors have an interest in improved regional integration, since this promotes more efficient production and offers greater opportunities for sales.

Countries that do not receive large amounts of foreign investment because their markets are small or because they lack such natural resources as petroleum and natural gas which are attractive to investors, or because foreign investors have little confidence in their investment opportunities, have much to gain by becoming parts of regional markets. For this reason, transition economies, and above all the countries of Central Asia and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), only stand to gain and will be able to attract more direct foreign investment on the basis of regional integration. Regional integration in Central Asia could enhance production efficiency on the basis of functional specialization and economies of scale.

In a nutshell, since Ethiopia has planned and been going to join the World Trade Organization, it has to well expand its business scope and dynamism. The engagement of foreign investors in myriads of undertakings is of paramount importance in helping the nation meet the set target.

In due course of hosting a number of foreign investors, the country can draw important lessons in a range of parameters, become technologically advanced and able to produce products in terms of quality and quantity. The sectors so far closed for foreign investors could also be much more productive and competitive as well. Hence, the measure taken by the government is timely and helps the nation go with global advancement and intensity thereby its products and services could definitely be continentally and globally competitive. Most importantly, the step helps create a number of jobs for a number of citizens.

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

Editorial

Bold position, concrete steps to ensure lasting peace

To find a quick fix to ongoing crises and a lasting solution to backlogged problems, the Ethiopian government has been sticking to dual dual-tracked approach. From signing and firmly implementing the Pretoria peace deal to forming the National Dialogue Commission, the government has taken concrete steps to usher in the country in on the path of lasting peace and stability. The bold measure of the incumbent to sit with armed groups and its consistency to enter in a peaceful dialogue has achieved relative peace in the northern part of the country despite ongoing conflicts in some pockets of Amhara and Oromia states.

At different times the government has called on the armed entities to lay down their arms and find peaceful solutions to whatever their legitimate and political demands, be it political, economic or what have you. To give justice to victims and probe claims of war crimes and basic human rights violations, the government also is facilitating a conducive environment for the implementation of transitional justice. Transitional justice and national dialogue are imperative as a conflict resolution tool in the political landscape of severely divided and post-conflict societies like Ethiopia.

On the other hand, to protect civilians and stop bloodshed as well as restore law and order, the government has been forced into using force. The incumbent in this regard had made clear that it has a constitutional mandate to keep law and order and ensure security. It is the government which has the right to a monopoly of violence.

What is more, to rehabilitate militants and rectify victims, a rehabilitation commission has been formed and commenced work.

The country is now toiling to make the ongoing activities a success with the national dialogue embracing embarking on national discussion. In this regard, the support of all Ethiopians and the international community is much needed. In a statement, the Ethiopian National Security Council underscored the need to build up on the ongoing efforts to mend the deep-seated national fractures through an inclusive approach.

The Pretoria Peace Agreement signifies a mature and resolute decision to prevent future generations from inheriting a legacy of winners and losers characterized by animosity, the National Security Council said.

According to the council, three problem-solving mechanisms are put in place to address the existing and new political challenges resulting from recent circumstances such as the conflict in the northern part of the country: the National Dialogue, the Transitional Justice and the National Rehabilitation processes.

The process of identifying candidates, who would participate in the national dialogue, has been conducted in 10 regional states and two city administrations where some 12,294 participants have been identified from 679 districts, it said.

The National Rehabilitation Commission is working to ensure the reintegration of ex-combatants into society through the ongoing Disarmament Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) process, the Council pointed out.

Activities are underway to reinstate citizens displaced due to the conflict in the northern part of the country and security problems in the Oromia and Amhara regions to their homes. The leaderships of the Oromia and Amhara Regional States have managed to return many IDPs from camps to their homes, according to the statement.

“We have therefore put in place three pathways that would enable us to rectify our historical shortfalls through resolving past political challenges through inclusive national dialogue, implementation of transitional justice and upholding peaceful political avenues, the statement underscored.”

These seemingly toll orders are must do and will be instrumental to restore lasting peace and redress the years of political divisions and pave the way for a state building. In this regard, the contribution of all Ethiopians and cooperation of the international community is imperative to, make these grand initiatives a success.



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The Ethiopian Herald

Opinion

Developing common national narratives critical for Ethiopia's statehood

BY SOLOMON DIBABA

The author of this article attempts to forward some ideas pertaining to the importance of ensuring common narratives for the peaceful development of this country. Ethiopians, just like any other people across the world harbor diverse views, ideas, opinions and personal narrative. This is certainly natural, common, acceptable and is expected

The notion of developing common narratives generally springs from common needs, interests, values and attitudes that all Ethiopians can cherish. These socio-psychological attributes emanate from the fact that human beings are social and socialized in many ways.

Developing a common national narrative for Ethiopia is crucial for fostering unity, reconciliation, and social cohesion in a diverse and historically complex society like Ethiopia. What does it take to develop and promote common national narrative in Ethiopia? The writer would like to identify some salient features of the means of achieve this.

First of all, it is important to engage in inclusive dialogue and consultation processes involving diverse stakeholders, including government representatives, political parties, civil society organizations, religious leaders, traditional elders, youth groups, women's associations, and representatives of ethnic communities. Create platforms for open, transparent, and constructive discussions on shared values, aspirations, and challenges facing the nation. This involves learning to listen to each other and respecting ones opinion whether it is right or wrong.

Many of us have hard times listening to each other but focus only on what we want to say. This can end up in misquotations, biases and wrong conclusions.

Second, Acknowledging and addressing historical grievances, injustices, and traumas that have contributed to division and conflict in Ethiopia is an important approach to promoting common narratives. Promoting reconciliation, transitional justice, and dialogue mechanisms to foster healing, understanding, and forgiveness among different ethnic and religious communities is of vital importance to pave the way for establishing common narratives.

Third, emphasizing on the promotion of a unifying national identity that transcends ethnic, religious, regional, or linguistic differences need to be considered. Highlight the common historical, cultural, and linguistic heritage shared by all Ethiopians while respecting and celebrating the country's diversity.

Fourth, developing shared vision and national development agenda that reflects the aspirations and priorities of all Ethiopians. It is also important to identify common goals, such as poverty reduction, economic development, access to education and healthcare, environmental sustainability, and good governance that can unite people across ethnic, regional, and religious lines.

Fifth, promoting education and awareness programs that foster civic education, critical thinking, and media literacy among citizens are important elements for promoting common national narratives in Ethiopia.. Encourage dialogue on democratic values, citizenship rights, and responsibilities, and the importance of peaceful coexistence and nation-building.

Sixth, Political leaders, opinion makers, and influencers at federal and regional levels have a crucial role to play in promoting a common national narrative and fostering national unity. Lead by example, demonstrate commitment to dialogue, reconciliation, and inclusive governance, and refrain from rhetoric or actions that exacerbate ethnic tensions or divisions.

Seventh, celebrating and promoting Ethiopia's rich cultural diversity through festivals, cultural events, and heritage preservation initiatives. Encourage intercultural dialogue, exchange programs, and cultural diplomacy to foster mutual understanding and appreciation among different ethnic groups and

communities.

Eighth, empowering and engaging the youth in Ethiopia as agents of change and advocates for national unity and reconciliation. Invest in youth leadership development, education, entrepreneurship, and civic participation to build a generation of Ethiopians committed to building a peaceful and prosperous future for their country.

Ninth, implement community-based projects and initiatives that promote social cohesion, interethnic harmony, and dialogue at the grassroots level. Support peacebuilding efforts, conflict resolution mechanisms, and intercommunal reconciliation processes in areas affected by ethnic tensions or violence.

Tenth, strengthening democratic institutions, rule of law and governance mechanisms to ensure equal rights, justice, and representation for all Ethiopians is equally important to further develop the contents of common national narratives. Addressing systemic inequalities, corruption, and impunity that undermine trust and confidence in the state and contribute to social division which needs to be addressed in the process of developing common national narratives.

By taking these steps and fostering a culture of dialogue, inclusivity, and mutual respect, Ethiopia can develop a common national narrative that promotes unity, reconciliation, and sustainable development for the benefit of all its citizens.

Promoting a common national narrative in Ethiopia faces several significant challenges, given the country's diverse ethnic, linguistic, religious, and cultural composition. Some of the most outstanding challenges may be mentioned as follows

Ethiopia has a complex history of ethnic tensions, conflicts, and grievances rooted in historical injustices, marginalization, and inequalities. Addressing these deep-seated grievances and historical traumas requires sensitivity, dialogue, and reconciliation efforts to build trust and understanding among different ethnic groups.

Ethiopia's political landscape is characterized by a fragmented party system, with numerous ethnic-based political parties competing for power and influence. This fragmentation can exacerbate ethnic divisions and hinder efforts to develop a common national narrative based on shared values and aspirations. These parties seem to be active only when elections are conducted but had continued to issue waves of press releases many of which have continuously accuse the government on issues that are caused by other groupings that labor from dawn to dusk to take power by military means.

Ethiopia's media environment is highly polarized along ethnic and political lines, with many outlets serving as mouthpieces for particular ethnic or political interests. Biased reporting, hate speech, and disinformation contribute to social divisions and undermine efforts to foster a common national narrative. This is particularly true of social media outlets that are busy discrediting government development programs and conducting defamation campaigns on the ENDF.

Moreover, over the last six years some western commercial media outlets like the BBC, VOA and CNN have continued to deliberately broadcast unverified news stories about the country without caring to verify from the government. In fact their imbalanced reporting has helped to further increase media polarization in the country.

Economic inequalities between regions, urban and rural areas, and different ethnic communities exacerbate social tensions and undermine efforts to promote national unity. Addressing disparities in access to resources, opportunities, and services is essential for building a cohesive and inclusive society.

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

Business & Economy

Overcoming existing challenges, attaining sustainable development

BY ABEBE WOLDEGIORGIS

Despite Africa is facing multifaceted problems that hinder economic developments such as macro- economic deficit including foreign currency crunch, trade deficit, inflation, debt service and illegal trade, the continent is struggling to embark on the right track. Though some progress witnessed, the vulnerability of agriculture sector which is the main stay of the continent's economy to extreme climate conditions made the path to development rocky.

In her opening remarks of the 10th session of the African Regional Forum on Sustainable Development recently took place here in the capital, president Sahilework Zewdie said that Africa has faced multiple and interlocking challenges in recent years. The continent has experienced the lingering effects of the COVID 19 pandemic, devastating impacts of climate change, geopolitical tensions, economic instability and extreme poverty among other pressing challenges.

These crises have worsened existing vulnerabilities proportionally affecting the most marginalized and impoverished communities across the globe particularly in the African continent. "These impediments have hindered our progress towards the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and reversed our hard won gains. Obviously the enormous challenges the continent is facing today demand the continent's resolute commitment to eradicating poverty and ensure the effective delivery of sustainable resilient and innovative solutions. So prioritizing the needs of the most vulnerable groups and ensures is essential," she said.

The SDG's intentions are guided by the principles of equity, solidarity and sustainability. As to the President, there are three key areas that seek undivided attention and intervention of concerned bodies in Africa.

First, it is important to recognize that poverty eradication is a top priority and requires holistic and integrated approach for substantial investment in peace building, quality education, health care infrastructure and sustainable means of livelihood focusing on women and using empowerment.

This comprehensive approach ensures that tackling the root causes not the symptoms of poverty is a primary issue. By addressing this fundamental challenge, governments can establish a solid foundation for sustainable development.

Second, it is of utmost importance that recognizing innovation as the powerful force in the March toward this sustainable development. It would be practical catalyzing transformative change, accelerating progress and unlocking new opportunities for inclusive development and poverty eradication by harnessing the power of innovation.

Third, as to the president, it is crucial to demonstrate nations' unwavering commitment to regenerating adequate resources to finance their development plans in light of this. It is essential to encourage



African journey towards sustainability

saving and work towards the reform of multilateral financial institutions by actively engaging in collective multilateral efforts so that, countries in need receive the necessary resources to finance their development.

Ethiopia has made significant progress in mobilizing the domestic and international resources for rapid and sustained economic growth and development. In fact, it appears one of the few African countries that have registered impressive results in implementing the goals of agenda 2063 specially in mobilizing innovative financing. This experience would be benchmarked for accelerated implementation of the remaining goals of the strategic plan.

The African Economic Commission commissioner, Hanan Morsey (PhD) on her part said that, the Africa We Want, of the African Union has been hampered by numerous crises. If the two agenda 2030 and 2063 are to be rescued in Africa, fundamental changes in the structure of regional economies and a redesigned global financing architecture are critical. In line with this objective, the theme of the 2024 high-level political forum on sustainable development will be "Reinforcing the 2030 Agenda and eradicating poverty in times of multiple crises".

The performance of Africa in Climate change has resulted in weather and climate extremes around Poverty is multidimensional and caused by underlying structural challenges. The chief drivers of poverty in Africa include lack of access to clean water, sanitation, electricity, health and education services; inequality; infrastructure gaps; climate change; ethnic conflict; and limited employment opportunities.

Since the mid-2010s, Africa has made modest progress in reducing the proportion of the population living below the global poverty line of 2.15 USD per day. Poverty levels in sub-Saharan Africa fell from 38.5 % in 2015 to 35.4 % in 2019. Nevertheless, in 2022, Africa accounted for more than half (54.8 %) of people living in poverty worldwide.

The levels of absolute poverty have increased by 74 % 1990, with East and West Africa accounting for about 73 % of the impoverished people on the continent. It is

proved that gainful employment is a pathway to improving living standards. However, the proportion of the employed population of Africa that falls below the global poverty line is higher than the proportion for the world as a whole.

North and Southern Africa have the lowest proportions among African sub regions. Access to safe drinking water and sanitation services is a human right and is fundamental to dignity, health, prosperity, food security and prospects of making a living.

The proportion of the population of Sub Saharan Africa using basic drinking water services increased from 58.95 % in 2015 to 65.03 % in 2019, but it was below the corresponding proportions of the overall global population, which were 88.36 % and 91.18 %, respectively. Sub-Saharan Africa has the lowest levels of access to water, sanitation and hygiene services in the world.

Less than 35 % of the population of sub-Saharan Africa had access to basic sanitation services between 2015 and 2022. The lowest proportions of the population using basic sanitation services were recorded in Central and East Africa.

Official Development Assistance (ODA) grants specifically for poverty reduction in Africa ranged from about 0.06 to 0.07 % of the gross national income of African countries between 2015 and 2021. Of the sub regions, East Africa received a higher proportion of ODA grants for poverty reduction, followed by Central Africa and West Africa

The globe is evidenced by the increase in frequency and severity of heat waves, heavy precipitation, wildfires, droughts and tropical cyclones. This is having serious effects on the safety and health of workers, who are frequently the first to be exposed to these hazards, often for longer periods and at greater intensities than the general population.

According to the International Labor Organization (ILO), climate change related hazards have been linked to numerous health effects, including injuries, cancer, cardiovascular disease, respiratory conditions, macular degeneration and mental health issues. The financial implications are also considerable, due to lost productivity,

business disruptions and damaged infrastructure.

It further stated that "Ensuring safety and health at work in a changing climate" presents critical evidence related to six key impacts of climate change which were chosen for their severity and the magnitude of their effects on workers: excessive heat, ultraviolet (UV) radiation, extreme weather events, workplace air pollution, vector-borne diseases and changes in agrochemical use. It includes the most pertinent evidence regarding worker exposures and the main safety and health impacts.

The ILO has already developed tripartite responses to protect workers from many of these risks, in the form of international labor standards, codes of practice and technical guidelines specifically related to safety.

These instruments can strengthen adaptation frameworks by providing the legal foundation for addressing climate-related risks. The fundamental Occupational Safety and Health /OSH/ conventions Nos. 155 and 187 constitute a blueprint for the progressive realization of the fundamental principle and right at work of a safe and healthy working environment, including by protecting workers from workplace hazards and risks associated with climate change.

The recently adopted ILO Global Strategy on Occupational Safety and Health 2024-30 emphasizes that OSH concerns related to climate change should be positioned high on global and national policy agendas, with key partnerships secured at national and international levels.

The ILO 2015 Guidelines for a Just Transition towards Environmentally Sustainable Economies and Societies for all identify as one of the key policy areas to address the environmental, economic and social sustainability of the transition.

The ILO is involved in a number of initiatives which are linked to climate change and just transition. For example, the Vision Zero Fund, a G-7 initiative that aims to reduce accidents, injuries and diseases in supply chains is implementing a range of activities to address the impacts respect of Sustainable Development Goals.

Art & Culture

Mignot Getachew: The painter gifted in turning autistic children around

BY NAOL GIRMA

Disability from days of yore to current days is a global topic of concern that is affecting not only people living with disability but also societies in various ways. From ancient times to these days, misconceptions about such people in societies are not strange, for most traditional societies believe disabilities are the results of curses. As such, oblivious to the fact that disability is not inability, they wrongly consider people in this category as burdens to society. Meanwhile, due to the concerted efforts by governmental and International Organizations, there is a remarkable upturn in societies' mind set of disability.

A talented painter with a compassionate heart, Mignot Getachew has channelled her artistic pursuit towards creating a positive impact in the lives of autistic children consecrating the major portion of her life to the passion. Tapping into her verve, capturing her imaginations and observations on canvas via her brushes and nimble hands and through her unique approach to painting, she has found a way to empower these children, helping them unleash their creativity and express themselves in ways that words often fail to depict.

Mignot's work has not only touched the hearts of many families but has also spotlighted the incredible hidden abilities and potential of autistic individuals. The art column of The Ethiopian Herald has got her for interview. Excerpts

Could you brief us about your life as a painter and also about the ups and downs you navigated through?

My life as a painter is a lot more fun. I often focus on the bright side. I'm living my best life in the present because I do what I love the most. What else could gratify one than this? Art makes me happy. As part of life, the ups and downs are always there. Fortunately, I dare say I did not experience the downs much.

What motivated you to create paintings zeroing in on autistic children?

Whether in individual or collaborative works, a sense of urgency is palpable in those pieces, a sense that the actual stories of people living with disability have been ignored, brushed aside, or diminished and therefore must be told. I have a client who owns autistic children center. So she needed a wall painting in the center. Mindful of this gap, I created the looked-forward piece. After I brought to life the painting I felt excited as autistic kids badly need art therapy. This approach is really good for their mental health and the way they are treated.

What messages do you encapsulate in your paintings?

I aim to convey a sense of awe, wonder, and peace. I want my paintings to evoke a sense of interconnectedness and joy, and to evoke feelings of elation, hope, and healing. I also want my paintings to be a reminder of the



magnificence of the natural world and to inspire people to take action to protect it.

Have You assessed feedback from autistic children or their families about the impact of your paintings?

I did assess the children's turn around and received a feedback from their family members they are very happy about it. That has a big impact on the autistic community so they are very grateful for the work.

What advice do you give to aspiring painters who want to create art that highlights the secret of autistic children shrouded in mystery?

My advice to who wants to create influence-wielding art is "go for it." Do what makes you happy so that you will be successful. Follow your dreams and make it happen.

What are your future goals and aspirations for your work in terms of creating painting homing in on autism?

My future goals are to come up with a multitude of impactful paintings. Even here in USA, specifically in the Ethiopian community, people do not have much information about autistic kids. As people could not get the required knowledge they need to know the idea could not sink in. So parallel to the sensitization task, I will continue to do more painting for autistic kids.

Let us talk about art therapy, what really is it?

Art therapy is a form of therapy that uses the creative process of making art to improve a person's mental, emotional, and physical well-being. It can be an effective way for individuals to probe inward and explore their feelings, express themselves, and work through psychological issues. Art therapy can be used with individuals of all ages and backgrounds, making it a versatile and accessible form of therapy. It can be especially beneficial for people who have difficulty expressing themselves verbally, such as children or those with signs of developmental disabilities.

What could be the best approaches toward art therapy?

There are various approaches to art therapy, but the basic premise is that creating art can help individuals tap into their subconscious thoughts and emotions in a way that tradition-



al talk therapy cannot. By working with different art materials and techniques, individuals can explore their feelings and experiences in a non-verbal way, allowing for deeper insight and healing.

What are the things people in art therapy exactly do?

In art therapy sessions, a trained art therapist will guide individuals in using art materials such as paint, clay, or collage to create images or projects that reflect their inner thoughts and emotions. The therapist may also provide prompts or exercises to help individuals explore specific themes or issues.

Would you enumerate about the benefits of it?

One of the key benefits of art therapy is its ability to promote self-expression and self-discovery. Through creating art, individuals can gain insight into their own emotions and experiences, as well as develop a sense of empowerment and agency over their own mental health. In addition to its therapeutic benefits, art therapy can also be a fun and an enjoyable way for individuals to relax and create. The act of making art can be a meditative and calming experience, providing a welcome escape from the stresses of daily life.

How effective is it?

The impact of my work on autistic children has been remarkable. Through art, children who struggle to communicate verbally find a means to express their inner world. Painting becomes a transformative process, enabling them to communicate their joys, fears, and thoughts that may have otherwise remained trapped within them.

Beyond the therapeutic benefits, my art sessions instill a sense of accomplishment and confidence in the children. As they observe their creations taking shape, they develop a sense of pride, boosting their self-esteem and encouraging further exploration of their artistic abilities.

Science & Technology

Startup Ethiopia exhibition showcases local, new inventions, innovations

BY DARGIE KAHSAY

Promoting and supporting startup technologies is critically important in this digital era especially for developing countries like Ethiopia. Ethiopia's economy is among the fastest growing economies and the country is working to realize prosperity. To accelerate its economic development, Ethiopia has been making the technology sector among the key pillars of its economic development especially during the past five years.

To inspire startup businesses and innovations in the technology sector, the government creates suitable ecosystem for the sector. As part of the efforts to promote startups and new innovations, 'Startup Ethiopia Exhibition' was organized at the Science Museum here in Addis Ababa. "Startup Ethiopia Exhibition", a national startup exhibition that hosted over 900 participant startups from across the nation, kicked off on 08 April 2024. It will remain opened for visitors until April 28.

In the three-week fair that has hosted startups in various stages, ranging from initial to advanced level, participants are displaying their innovations, ideas and products. Visiting the exhibition on 11 April, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) stated that "Startup Ethiopia showcased the aspiration, ingenuity, and innovation of participants in the ecosystem." Appreciating the efforts and creativity of the startup innovators, PM Abiy called the public to visit the startup exhibition. "I highly recommend everyone to visit the exhibition and interact with the exhibitors," PM Abiy said after visiting the exhibition.

EPA journalists visited the 'Startup Ethiopia Exhibition'. Among the exhibitors portraying their products at the exhibition is found Fekadu Diriba (PhD). Fekadu created an Automatic Electric Power Regulation Device. As to him, this innovation aimed to solve electric interruption as it remains a serious problem.

Citing documents, Fekadu stated that around 35 percent of energy lays wastage during transmission from the grid to every beneficiary. In industries and factories, challenges related to energy interruption remain a problem adding his innovation targets to solve this problem. The product helps to solve electric loss and interruption.

The Automatic Electric Power Regulation Device performs three basic tasks, controlling electricity, increasing voltage and by increasing system capacity it helps to reduce energy consumption. According to Fekadu, he started innovating this product in 2016; despite he stopped it at the interval.

Inspired and attracted by the attention given to startup businesses and technological innovations by government in recent years, Fekadu resumed and strengthened his innovation and creative works. Currently, his invention is registered and granted a patent right by Ethiopian Intellectual Property



Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) visiting the Startup Ethiopia Exhibition at Science Museum

Authority (EIPA). In addition, with the help of Ministry of Innovation and Technology, his product is equipped with software program and other technologies, he stated.

Currently, Fekadu is founder and CEO of Jangel Power Engineering Industry and is on process to start producing his invention product. As to Fekadu, with the financial support from Startup funds, his company is on the way to start production of the product soon. "The new technology can serve for over 20 years without maintenance and will benefit all energy consumers. It helps companies and customers to save power," Fekadu said. According to Fekadu, the technology is new for Ethiopia adding that companies that installed this technology can save energy wastage that allows them to use the saved energy for other machines.

Fekadu reiterated that it needs importing an electric device to produce products, while a machine is available at home to design the PVC board. "Ministry of Innovation and Technology has authorized me to design the PVC board at home," he added. As to him, if a manufacturing machine to the PVC board and the Surface board is imported, the other part of the product can be fully produced at home.

For Fekadu, when the technology starts operation, during the initial operation, it would create some 500 job opportunities. And after five years, by covering the local demand, he has a plan to export to African countries. He is working to realize his dream and he believes that the technology will have a tremendous benefit in the sector.

"I started this innovation three years ago at startup level. But, as I didn't find supports during the early years due to less attention

to the startup businesses, it delays the operation," he stated. However, currently there is a conducive ecosystem for startups and he is working to realize his project and Fekadu calls those engaged in the startup business to use the current opportunity.

Samuel Getnet and his friends are showcasing their products producing materials from different wastages. Using wastages of grass, paper, water hyacinth and Inset, they have managed to produce different products. By recycling wastages, Samuel and his friends are producing two types of products, packaging and cake plate.

Samuel noted that the packaging products are products to carry different products and can replace plastic bags. Not only replacing plastic bags, the products are suitable for soil fertility and environmental protection. As to him, the products are strong and can serve for long period. "In Ethiopia, the demand of plastic bags is high" Samuel said adding that on the average from 600,000 to 800,000 plastic bags are used in a month. Samuel and his friends are working to exploit this market potential as plastic bags are polluting the environment. They are dreaming to replace these plastic bags by renewable product.

The second product that Samuel and his friends produced is a cake plate, used to serve product during cake making. As to Samuel, cake plate is among the challenges for cake producers in Ethiopia. Samuel said that their product can solve this problem. As to him, the price of the imported cake plate is 120 birr while the price of the product they manufactured is only 45 birr. Hence, those engaged in producing cake can find the product easily at lower cost.

Currently, their company creates job

opportunities for seven youths and they are dreaming to export their product in the long run. Samuel said that they were initiated after realizing the plastic bags pollution in their surroundings to start the project. They started the project 15 months ago and currently, their products are on the market. Especially, the cake plate product is loved by customers in Bahir Dar and Gonder cities, according to Samuel.

According to Samuel, his team is receiving continuous trainings to equip them to develop their startup business. By using the training and other opportunities, they are working to develop the manufacturing machines to digital machines so as to produce quality and competitive products.

Nardos Alemayehu also presented her product, AfroRead Mobile Application at the exhibition. According to Nardos, AfroRead is a digital publishing platform and mobile book-reading app providing easy access to Ethiopian literature in both eBook and audiobook format. According to Nardos, the application was started in 2020 by four Ethiopian youths.

For Nardos due to the soaring up paper price, it has become difficult for authors to print books and customers are unable to accommodate the price of printed books. Hence, the new application targets to find solutions for the issue. As to her, the application helps to read digital books. The application, so far, uploads over 500 books.

The startup exhibition helps these youth and exhibitors displaying their products to the public. The government's attention to the sector is initiating them to develop their inventions.

Society



Empowering women farmers, accelerating sustainable development

BY LEULSEGED WORKU

African women are not only the ones who are destined to carry out backbreaking house chores and are accountable to look after their children and the entire families. They are also the ones who bear the responsibility of taking care of the economy of their family.

Women's role in supporting the economy of their family goes beyond fetching water, cooking food, or undertaking any other household chores. They also directly engage in farming activities and contribute significantly to food production and the agricultural sector's growth. However, despite this effort, they are not seen benefiting from the fruits of their hands.

In most cases, women in agriculture, compared to their counterparts, are vulnerable to poverty and have limited access to resources and opportunities. To this end, empowering them through training and improving access to market and financial services are suggested by experts to help lift them out of poverty and create sustainable livelihoods for themselves and their families.

Recently, the 10th Session of the African Regional Forum on Sustainable Development was conducted here in Addis Ababa from April 23 to 25, 2024 under the theme: "Reinforcing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063: Eradicating poverty in times of multiple crises"

At the session, several issues were raised and discussed among participant countries' and sustainable agricultural development was one of the issues. As it was stated at the meeting, the challenges of climate change and its adverse effects are hugely impacting the economy of African countries and affecting women in agriculture negatively; because they are always seen shouldering the burden without getting significant benefits.

In an exclusive interview with The Ethiopian Herald, Platform for Agricultural

Risk Management (PARM) Capacity Development Specialist, Francesca Nugnes said that several factors are deterring African women from being direct beneficiaries of the system.

According to her, absence of proper quantitative data, limitation in value chain interventions, poor support and other related problems are some of the drawbacks that restrict women from benefiting from the sector. This gap needs a deep analysis and collection of appropriate resources.

Availing various technological mechanisms, designing and strengthening value chain support programs have key roles not only in supporting African women in agriculture, but also advancing the sector and warding off frequent hunger, she added.

Highlighting the key role that the coordinated efforts of several stakeholders, such as PARM play in addressing the problem, she said: "In collaboration with different countries, PARM is doing its level best to address the challenges. Identifying various mechanisms and tools is one step towards addressing the problem to allow farmers to be more productive and resilient. Thus, they will be able not only to produce for their consumption, but they can possibly sell extra products, generate income and get out of poverty."

PARM is supporting Ethiopia's efforts in areas of agricultural production and productivity. The implementation of PARM process which was started in Ethiopia in 2014, has paved the way to provide technical and co-financial support to facilitate the integration of Agricultural Risk Management (ARM) into Ethiopia's National Agriculture and Food Security Investment Plan and related development programs.

Regional Director WFP Southern Africa countries, Mengsteab Haile, on his part told *The Ethiopian Herald* that African women in agriculture needs further support. They are the ones who carry all the burden of the family. They also serve as a backbone to the agricultural sector. Helping women engaged in farming supports the economy

Empowering African women in agriculture not only enhances food security but also contributes significantly to economic development and poverty alleviation

of the nation. In this regard, the agricultural sector needs to be transformed by allocating all the necessary resources and applying proper technology. What is more, local, regional and international organizations should work hand in glove to uplift African women farmers from their current position.

When asked how climate change is affecting Africa's economic performance, he said that various natural and manmade problems are causing enormous challenges to realizing continental food security. "Africa has a potential not only to feed itself, but also other continents. However, sufficient finance is still not allocated to the sector and farmers are not supported to equip themselves with technology and skills. That is why most African countries still suffer from hunger. Whenever there is a natural disaster, there is drought and hunger. Every country is seeking support from outside. But this is not the solution for Africa. If the continent needs to ensure sustainable development, it must capitalize on its resources. It should give priority to farmers. African farmers need to acquaint themselves with technologies to increase product and productivity. What is more, facilitating the financial resources to farmers should be given priority."

David Abudho is a Regional Climate Justice Advocacy and Campaigns Advisor for Oxfam in Africa. Asked by this reporter to what extent African countries are affected by climate change and how it affects the agricultural sector, the society and the whole economy, Abudho said that climate change is not only affecting the African continent. It is a global threat. Both human and natural disasters are causing serious damage to the planet, Earth. The recent flood in Dubai and other countries is a good indication how the planet Earth is severely affected by climate change.

Mitigating such a catastrophe needs a coordinated effort and the voices of African countries must be heard in the international arena. African countries have little contribution to environmental pollution. But they are the ones paying the highest price ranging from flood to hunger and drought.

Indeed, there is no area that is not affected by climate change. Whenever there is climate change, it affects the smooth functioning of the society. The economic sector is one area that is severely affected and most African countries are suffering because of it. The agriculture sector, which is the mainstay of almost all African countries, is at the mercy of climate change. In this regard, coordinated effort is needed to curb the challenge.

Overall, agriculture is a vital sector in Africa, and women play a significant role in this area. Empowering African women in agriculture not only enhances food security but also contributes significantly to economic development and poverty alleviation.

Promoting gender equality in the agricultural sector by addressing gender disparities such as promoting access to land, markets, inputs and financial services, is essential for economic development. African women can participate and benefit from agricultural value chains, increase their incomes, improve their livelihoods and boost economic growth at both the household and national levels.

Reinvigorating tourism...

the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that the redevelopment work will help Addis Ababa to fulfill international tourism criteria and make it a preferred destination for global visitors. "Upon completion, the renovation activities that have been carried out across the city will have a great contribution in further advancing the tourism industry."

Hirut (PhD) also stated that the installation of modern street lights and pedestrians' roads would enable tourists to enjoy the city's beauty and make their stay in the capital comfortable and memorable.

Noting that 8.2 million domestic tourists visited different attraction sites in the capital in the last nine months of the current fiscal year, she indicated that some 49.5 billion Birr has been channeled to the economy from the tourism revenue.

"Currently, the tourism activity in Addis Ababa is at a good level and the new projects that have been built across the metropolis have greatly contributed to increase the number of tourists. The 8.2 million domestic tourists that visited the city's different attraction sites in the reported period is exceeding our initial projection."

According to her, Addis Ababa is a city with high domestic tourist activity and the inauguration of Adwa Victory Memorial Museum has played a noble role in

increasing the number of visitors.

Apart from being the seat of the African Union (AU), United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UN-ECA) and other diplomatic institutions, foreign tourists from Sudan, Somalia, Djibouti, Eritrea and various foreign countries come to the capital for medical and business purposes.

In the first six months of the current fiscal year, some 29.9 billion Birr has been secured from 465,366 foreign tourists visited Addis Ababa and the revenue channeled to public investment.

Addis Ababa is growing in popularity with huge projects and all the new attractions in the city are convenient and interesting for foreign and domestic tourists, the Bureau Head remarked.

In recent years, Addis Ababa has seen a steady increase in local and international tourist arrivals, with visitors drawn to its rich cultural heritage and warm hospitality. The city has become a popular destination for both leisure and business travelers, with an upward trend in the number of international arrivals and hotel bookings.

Accordingly, one of the key challenges is the need for improved infrastructure, including transportation, accommodation, and tourist facilities. Improving these aspects

will make it easier for visitors to explore the city and enjoy a comfortable stay. By promoting traditional music, dance, art, and cuisine, Addis Ababa can offer visitors a unique cultural experience that highlights the country's diverse and vibrant identity. The city's historical landmarks, such as the Ethiopian National Museum, Merkato (the largest open market in Africa), the Holy Trinity Cathedral among others provide insights into Ethiopia's past and are key attractions that can be marketed to history enthusiasts and travelers interested in heritage tourism.

Tourism experts also recommended that to increase visibility and attract more tourists, Addis Ababa can benefit from implementing innovative marketing strategies. Utilizing social media platforms, targeted online advertising, and engaging website content can help showcase the city's unique offerings and reach a wider audience of potential visitors. Additionally, partnering with influencers and travel bloggers who have a strong online presence can help generate buzz about Addis Ababa, create authentic content, and inspire their followers to consider the city as their next travel destination.

Moreover, upgrading accommodation facilities is of critical importance to win the expectation and the diverse needs of

tourists. From luxury hotels to budget-friendly options, ensuring a range of comfortable and safe places to stay will attract a wider range of visitors. Additionally, promoting unique and culturally immersive accommodation experiences, such as homestays or boutique hotels, can add a special touch to their stay in Addis Ababa.

In addition, incorporating eco-friendly initiatives not only helps preserve Addis Ababa's natural beauty but also attracts environmentally conscious travelers. Implementing waste management programs, promoting renewable energy sources, and supporting sustainable practices in tourism activities can contribute to a greener and more attractive city for tourists.

In sum, with a strategic focus on promoting sustainability, embracing authenticity, and improving accessibility, Addis Ababa is on a trajectory to emerge as a prominent tourist destination in Africa. By harnessing its unique offerings and engaging with local communities, the city is laying a strong foundation for continued growth in the tourism sector. As Addis Ababa evolves and adapts to the changing landscape of travel, the potential to attract more tourists and showcase its beauty and charm to the world remains promising.

ECA urges African countries to adopt technological solutions to monitor their development strategies

ADDIS ABABA -- To bolster national planning activities, policymakers have been urged to embrace digital tools to foster greater transparency, efficiency, and effectiveness.

The call to action was made during the meeting on "Leveraging Digital Technologies for Integrated Planning to Advance the SDGs and Agenda 2063 in Times of Multiple Crises", which took place as a side event at the Tenth Session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development (ARFSD-10).

Mr Antonio Pedro, Deputy Executive Secretary of the UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), stressed the importance of technology in supporting development planning systems. He said that while many countries do an excellent job of identifying their priorities through extensive stakeholders' consultation, the number of identified priorities is often so numerous that implementation becomes a challenge.

To address this challenge, ECA developed the Integrated Planning and Reporting Tool (IPRT), a web-based tool designed to enhance the effectiveness of planning. The IPRT aims to strengthen planning systems by leveraging technology, allowing for the digital tracking of national, provincial and sector plans in alignment with annual budgets and international commitments such as SDGs and Agenda 2063.

Mr Bartholomew Armah, Chief of Development Planning in the Macroeconomics and Governance

Division at ECA highlighted the tool's ability to facilitate integrated and coherent planning, addressing the issue of disconnected planning frameworks at various levels and ensuring alignment with global commitments. "The IPRT represents a significant step forward in the integration of multiple development agendas into national development plans, offering a harmonized approach to progress reporting", he said.

Ms. Annette Griessel, Deputy Director General of National Planning Coordination at the South African Department of Planning, Monitoring, and Evaluation (DPME), highlighted the transformative role of technology in redressing the development disparities created by South Africa's apartheid past.

She noted the progress made in reforming the planning system, ensuring their alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Africa's Agenda 2063, "which is seen as a cornerstone in building a capable developmental state".

The IPRT has already been deployed in more than 30 countries with ongoing efforts to ensure its use by other countries on the continent. It makes the tracking of performance on the indicators of the National development plan more user-friendly.

The e-meeting was organized by ECA's Macroeconomics and Governance Division and the Office for Eastern Africa.

Source: UNECA

Economic Report on Africa 2024 - Investing in a Just and Sustainable Transition in Africa

ADDIS ABABA -- African countries face many economic, social, and environmental challenges. These global challenges render "business as usual" strategies unsustainable, and a new transformative approach is needed for a Just and Sustainable Transition (JST) in Africa, according to the Economic Report on Africa 2024.

The 2024 Economic Report on Africa themed "Investing in a Just and Sustainable Transition in Africa" was launched in Addis Ababa on 24th April 2024. The report analyses the opportunities and policies for Africa to build a just and sustainable economic system. For this to materialize, African countries need holistic development plans and strategies that fundamentally redirect their production, consumption, governance, technology, human capital, and financial systems.

In his opening remarks, Mr. Claver Getete, Executive Secretary, United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), stated that a just and sustainable transition that ensures accelerated, inclusive, and sustainable growth, as well as diversification and green industrialization will help Africa reach its potential.

Ms. Zuzana Schwidrowski, Director, Macroeconomics and Governance Division, UNECA, delivering the presentation on the report, highlighted that Africa has window of opportunity to undertake impactful JST guided by an African-informed narrative and needs. Factors such as youthful population, arable land, renewable resource endowments, huge deposits of strategic minerals, and latecomer advantages from emerging technologies position Africa to shape the sustainability transition at the global level.

To reach its objectives, the JST needs to reflect Africa's specificities. An interpretation of a JST that serves Africa's needs to be well

defined as an economic system encompassing environmental sustainability, social mitigation, and green industrialization. In view of this, achieving JSTs in Africa requires fundamental shifts at the economic (especially production and consumption), governance, and technology-systems. These shifts need to be driven by efficient natural resource use, sustainable infrastructure development, low-carbon industrialization, and resilient agroecological systems.

In addition, financing JST in Africa is crucial to ensure inclusive development of low-carbon resilient economies without compromising prosperity. Transitioning will require significant resources to fund capital, financial innovation, and social protection systems and the continent will need to catalyse innovative approaches. The international financial architecture also requires a paradigm shift.

While pursuing the JST, African policy makers are suggested to take a forward-looking vision and strategies that maximize the continent's benefits from emerging economic and technological opportunities and use continental mechanisms. It is also recommended that African countries expand their fiscal space by strategically leveraging their natural resources. This can be done by developing strategic minerals, national capital accounting, curbing illicit financial flows, and leveraging the continent's strategic role in the evolving geopolitical landscape.

In the closing remarks, Ms. Hanan Morsy, Deputy Executive Secretary-Programme, UNECA, reaffirmed the willingness of UNECA to assist Member states in their efforts to implement JST. "Given the magnitude of the challenge that climate change alongside rising inequality and poverty present, there is no time to waste. The time to act is now."

Source: UNECA



Friendship Square



Partial view of Entoto National Park

Reinvigorating tourism in Addis Ababa

BY TEWODROS KASSA

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia's vibrant capital city, is a destination ripe with cultural richness and historical significance yet faces challenges in attracting a steady flow of tourists. From leveraging its diverse cultural heritage and historical attractions to implementing innovative marketing strategies and enhancing

infrastructure, the city is poised to become a must-visit destination.

Currently, the Ethiopian government is undertaking new strategies and initiatives with the target to make Addis Ababa a compelling and an engaging destination for travelers from around the globe.

The tourism industry in Addis Ababa is a growing sector that holds immense potential for economic development and cultural exchange. With a diverse range of attractions, from ancient landmarks to bustling markets and delicious cuisine, Addis Ababa has something to offer every type of traveler.

Recently, the Addis Ababa Culture, Arts and

Tourism Bureau announced that the ongoing corridor project and other redevelopment activities will have a great contribution to stimulate and accelerate the tourism influx to the metropolis.

The Bureau Head Hirut Kassaw (PhD) told the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that the *See Reinvigorating tourism ... page 15*