



# The Ethiopian Herald

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Abebaw Ayalew

## Authority finalizes heritage inventory software dev't

- Corridor dev't aligns heritage preservation

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

ADDIS ABABA - The Ethiopian Heritage Authority (EHA) said it has finalized the development of national heritage inventory software to improve accessibility, emphasizing the compatibility of corridor development and heritage preservation.

See Authority finalizes... Page 3

# Abbay Dam to lure tourists to Ethiopia

BY ASHENAFI ANIMUT

ADDIS ABABA- Abbay Dam, Ethiopia's flagship project within its final stage, is

projected to be one of the global tourists' preferred destinations in the country, a veteran expert in the issue said.

Speaking to the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA),

Senior Tourism Expert Ayalew Sisay (PhD) stated that the dam, with its vast surroundings, is highly believed to be a gearshift for the

See Abbay Dam ... Page 3



## MoTRI makes bold steps to rise forex earnings

BY MESERET BEHAILU

ADDIS ABABA -Consolidated efforts are underway to increase export volume, diversify the products, and improve quality level that would boost Ethiopia's forex earnings, the Ministry of Trade and Regional Integration (MoTRI) said.

See MoTRI makes... Page 3

# Fairtrade Africa boosting Ethiopia's global coffee traceability

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

ADDIS ABABA - Fairtrade Africa said it is supporting 191 Ethiopian cooperative unions to boost production and sell at premium price in the international market.

Fairtrade Africa organizes annual platform competition for coffee unions to identify golden cup winners that accompany by three international judges.

Fairtrade Africa Ethiopia Country Representative, Tadese Negash told the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that the Fairtrade is providing technical support, training by creating market linkage across the world for 191 cooperatives to sell products in higher price.

As to him, the organization is following up 191 cooperatives of which 10 unions are

See Fairtrade Africa ... Page 3



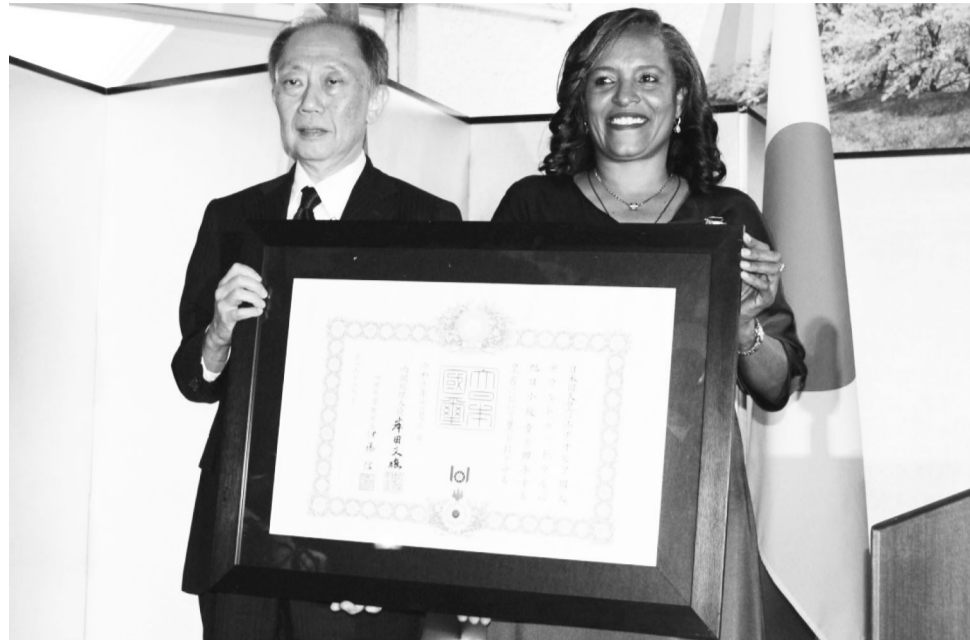
# Derartu receives Rising Sun Gold Rays award

BY ESSEYE MENGISTE

**ADDIS ABABA-** Ethiopian Athletics Federation President Deputy Commissioner Derartu Tulu received the Japanese Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Rosette from Japan Embassy.

Deputy Commissioner, Derartu Tulu, President of the Ethiopian Athletics Federation, has been awarded the Patent of Decoration “The Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Rosette” in the FY2023 Autumn, Ethiopian Athletics Federation said.

In addition to her sports diplomacy between Japan and Ethiopia, she was also awarded for her contribution to the development of athletics and national peace. And it aims at promoting the understanding and support of the Japanese public for the activities of the



recipients.

Thus, in the history of bilateral relations

between Ethiopia and Japan, she has been able to become the first Ethiopian to receive

the Golden Rays Award from Ethiopia.

According to the Ethiopian Athletics Federation, Derartu received the award from Japan’s Ambassador Shibata Hironori.

During the ceremony, Ambassador Shibata hoped that Commissioner Derartu will keep contributing to the promotion of sports exchanges between Japan and Ethiopia and encourage Ethiopian youth and young athletes to find interest in training in Japan, as well as invite many Japanese youth and athletes to train in Ethiopia.

She has played a significant role in boosting sports diplomacy and exchanges between Japan and Ethiopia since she has won a gold medal in the 2001 Tokyo International Women’s Marathon. Commissioner Derartu Tulu was previously awarded the trophy of Honor by the Japanese government for her contribution to sports diplomacy.



## University undertaking projects worth over 2.5 bln Birr

BY ESSEYE MENGISTE

**ADDIS ABABA-** Wolkite University announced that it is undertaking infrastructural projects worth over 2.5 billion Birr to improve quality of education and community services.

Wolkite University’s Construction Office Manager Tesfahun Gebre, told the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that some 25 different buildings and infrastructures are under construction at a cost of more than 2.5 billion Birr.

“The construction includes administrative and ICT buildings, student service offices, classrooms, dormitories, laboratories and other infrastructure,” he said.

One of the buildings comprises 11 laboratories designed to accelerate the university’s journey to become an experimental institute, he stated, adding that the university is constructing

various buildings and infrastructures in the current fiscal year to maintain the quality of education.

He further stated that over the last six months, the University attached due attention to infrastructure development and community services.

Tesfahun also said that three projects have been completed to improve community services within and outside of the campus.

He also mentioned that a standard daycare was built at a cost of 26 million Birr to ensure the benefit of the campus community.

Two drinking water projects for the local community of the university have also been built and qualified for rendering service. Apart from the already completed projects, there are also projects under construction, and activities are being carried out to complete as per the schedule, he expressed.

## ECX trades worth 19 bln Birr commodities in eight-month

BY ASHENAFI ANIMUT

**ADDIS ABABA -** The Ethiopian Commodity Exchange (ECX) said that it has transacted about 19 billion Birr from trading 1.7 million quintals of agricultural products over the last eight-months.

Speaking to the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA), ECX Chief Executive Officer Wondimagegnehu Negera said that the exchange has been undertaking trade facilitation activities to promote the commodity exchange system which connects traders with sellers.

As to him, ECX has made trade exchanges from 22 legally registered agricultural products and managed to transact about 19 billion Birr in the same period stated above.

Trading over 2.5 million quintals of commodities, he further mentioned that the exchange generated about 24.6 billion Birr in the last fiscal year.

“In a similar vein, over 382 billion Birr was also exchanged through the platform over the last sixteen years. Through its 25 branches across the country, the exchange is currently offering laboratory services to validate the condition of the products and facilitating the bidding process. It has developed a 24 hours transaction payment system for suppliers via its 23 partner banks and managed to advance the transactions advanced, fast and curb check related glitches,” the CEO said.

Apart from providing low-interest loans from banks, he emphasized that this payment system helps facilitate the import-export trade and ensure transparency on the tax collection process.

Also, it has built the latest warehouses



Wondimagegnehu Negera

that accommodate over 150,000 quintals in Metu, Bule Hora, Teppi, Gondar and Kombolcha.

Indicating the scarcity of warehouses that has long been impacting the farming communities, he said, the exchange has prepared over 60 warehouses throughout its branches to curtail the long chained and transport bureaucracies to the central market.

Mentioning the price of coffee supply chain, he stressed that the variability of the price ceiling is affecting the trading system.

It is to be recalled that ECX was established in 2008 with a view of improving the efficiency of the transaction systems and becoming the country’s key agricultural commodities forex generator.

## Graduates call on youth to find purpose in life

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

**ADDIS ABABA** - Software engineering graduates have called on the youth to find and foster passion in order to change life sustainably.

JICA recently graduated 50 Ethiopian students who received the first phase software training in mobile application engineering, back-end engineering, and DevOps engineering for six months.

Approached by *The Ethiopian Herald*, Graduate Dawit Yitagesu said that the youth must try hard to find and nurture its talent using every opportunity so as to improve its life.

He has learned DevOps engineering in the last six months using the chance facilitated by JICA in collaboration with the Ministry of Innovation and Technology, Safaricom Ethiopia and Sumitomo Corporation.

“Now I have a better skill and knowledge than I did have earlier. I would like to call up on the youth to search their passion and then finally work effectively to be productive in the work they want to engage,” Dawit stated.

He expressed that the training has helped him to improve his talent thereby inspiring him to change his life working diligently in the sphere.

“I was graduated from Debre Berhan University in electrical and computer engineering. I was working in software

development specifically as full-stack developer before I joined the training program that provided by JICA,” he said.

As to him, Safaricom Ethiopia has pledged to provide internship for the graduates.

Abdulasin Yenus have trained in Back-end engineering in similar chance created by JICA sponsorship.

He said, “I have learned degree in computer science before I joined such training program. I took the exam and then I was interviewed to the final training. Co-builder of the curriculum was Safaricom Ethiopia.”

Both trainees said that the training will change their skills and knowledge and help them to find better jobs.

## Fairtrade Africa...

certified comprising about 243,000 farmers.

He added that the organization is also working to improve traceability of products, participation of golden cup winners in the world of coffee event thereby connect to the market and expand their operations.

Fairtrade Africa is organizing golden cup competition for the last four consecutive years.

He said two unions are exporting value-added coffee product to nations like Morocco and Indonesia that have a huge demand of Ethiopian coffee.

“Every year after the Ethiopian Coffee Quality Contest held immediately the request comes from buyers then golden cup winners will export, share experience and sell at premium price”.

He said Fairtrade Africa will provide sponsor for this year's first gold cup winner to participate in the event of the World of Coffee that will take place in Copenhagen from June 27-29, 2024 to get market access across the world.

The 4<sup>th</sup> edition of Ethiopian Coffee Quality Contest 2024 was held in the Fairtrade Africa in partnership with the International Trade Centre and in the competition, Layo Teraga, a local coffee union won the first place and received a certificate. Banko Michata and Oromia Coffee farmers' cooperative unions finished second and third in the competition respectively.

ITC Ethiopia National Coordinator of the Netherlands Trust Fund, Simachew Mekonnen on his part said that supporting coffee producers enable them to be competitive in international market by creating better market platform through digitalizing of their business.

Project is working with six coffee farmers' cooperative unions and 18 enterprises to strengthen more and designed to value addition, roasting, cubing and brewing technical support to coffee roasters, he said. It will facilitate capacity development as pilot project until 2025.

## MoTRI makes bold steps to rise...

Talking to *The Ethiopian Herald*, MoTRI International Relations Expert Tesfaye Tadesse stated that the government has taken meticulous measures to increase forex earnings by introducing new products into the export trade system.

Tesfaye also said that contract and investment farming are among activities that can improve the quality of export items and they are also significantly useful to exploit technology, inputs, control, and the quality standard of the products.

Currently, the ministry has given due emphasis to make sure the export business is free from illegality and exerts efforts to monitor the contractual relations between exporters and importers and the timely

delivery of exportable items.

According to him, Ethiopia secured over 1.572 billion USD from the export of commodities under the MoTRI supervision in the past six months of this fiscal year while the plan was two billion for the reported period. Besides, the ministry also earned 402 million USD from exporting oilseeds and cereals, Hebrew crops, *khat*, livestock, forestry products, and animal fodder from the plan 494.6 million USD.

Efforts that have been exerted to increase quality level have brought promising results in boosting the revenue amassed from some agricultural commodities. For instance, the country secured 175,867.74 USD from grain export during the past six months of

the current year, while the performance surpassed that of the past year same period by 77.73%.

In the reported period, the country gained 109,656 USD exporting 61,602.9 tons of Hebrew crops. Furthermore, 571,469 USD was secured from coffee export while the revenue obtained from flowers was 225,637 USD. Similarly, 175,867 USD was amassed from grain export and Hebrew crops revenue hit 109,656 USD, the expert elaborated.

Improving productivity of small holder farmers, who supply the majority of Ethiopia's export items, is also said to be another priority area the government is working.

## Abbey Dam to lure tourists...

promotion of Ethiopia's tourism sector.

Abbey Dam, which lies over 1,740 square kilometers, holds about 74 billion meter cubes of water and its 246-kilometer length assists the construction of about 70 creator islands covering about 2,800 hectares. “Upon completion, the dam would be one of the best and preferable tourist destinations globally. Besides, the Nile is not just a river but it is also the symbol of origination and cultural endowments.”

Ayalew also noted that the mega project would create a great opportunity for the

global community to enjoy diversified cultures and histories and help promote Ethiopia's tourism blessings. The outcomes of the dam would be an additional impetus for other river tributaries and astonishing natural sceneries.

“Ethiopia's history is intertwined with the River Abbey, thus, the dam would be the country's additional tourism site beyond its socioeconomic outcomes. Accordingly, it is crucial to develop international-standard water parks, hotels, resorts, parking and other cutting-edge facilities around the dam.”

According to the expert, ensuring lasting peace and stability around the mega dam and across the country is critical to attracting more global tourists. Also, given its notable role in balancing the ecosystem and biodiversity conservation, the dam has brought multifaceted benefits in terms of irrigation, fishing, boating services and other related packages.

It is to be recalled that on April 2, 2024, Ethiopia commemorated the 13<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the launching of the construction of the Abbey Dam under the theme “We did it in unison”.

## Authority finalizes heritage inventory...

Briefing the media yesterday, EHA Director General Abebaw Ayalew stated that the authority has been registering tangible and intangible heritages based on meticulous standards.

Depending on heritage proclamation (criteria), the authority has also been conducting researches, registering, preserving and protecting heritages and other activities and making the architecture heritages be part of the national inventory.

“The national inventory would not merely be carried out in paper and it requires the digitalization of the process and the development of the national inventory

software aims to support the digitalization process.”

Abebaw also noted that the developed software passed the necessary steps and got a green light from the Office of the Prime Minister for implementation. In collaboration with the Information Network Security Administration (INSA), preparation has been finalized to conduct national inventory on movable and immovable heritages within the coming two months with a 24 million Birr budget.

Per to proclamation (standards) and part of the authority's restructuring, the heritages would be part of national inventory and

heritage registration will not be arbitrary.

Currently, the Addis Ababa City Administration has been undertaking corridor development and renovation activities in the city that contains several heritages such as urban building heritages, streets monuments and others.

According to the director general, the corridor development and renovation activities have been taking place without touching the main heritages including institutions. “Since cities are the centerpiece of development, it is an important to set criteria on urban building heritages, and in line with this, we took the experiences

of Switzerland, Japan and, Canada to set standards to register urban building as national heritages.”

The authority has been registering urban heritages based on style, construction, age, architecture, design, and other criteria and, listed some 147 urban buildings as heritages in Arada Sub City where the corridor development is taking place. “However, there are registered heritages that do not qualify the recently set standards.”

The corridor development and renovation activities required aligning with heritage preservation and protection and it is what has been done so far, Abebaw emphasized.

# Opinion

## Homegrown resolution for internecine conflicts

BY GETACHEW MINAS

The effects of mutually destructive and deadly war marked by slaughter within groups of the same country have become nearly impossible to record. Internecine wars, or internal conflicts, in Ethiopia may be intense resulting in the annihilation of thousands of citizens, making it difficult to register them. Some people may have disappeared in the middle of skirmishes in which residential areas are completely destroyed. These destructions have resulted in dispersing of people, scattering their families and properties all over the place.

The current conflict is expected to have a wide-ranging impact on various aspects of the Ethiopian society. Those persons residing abroad suffer from the news of disastrous wars and social conflicts in their country of origin. Though not directly affected by the war, they may be subjected to mental, emotional and disturbing situations. They may be subjected to the mass media that may distort the facts, the truth and the reality at the war fronts within Ethiopia. The distortions are worsened as one move away from the place of war, battle, and conflict, depending on the level of confrontation between the fighting groups.

The economic and social impacts of the war become disastrous as it goes on indefinitely. The violence discourages investors from undertaking any activity in Ethiopia. Foreign investors want to have peace, law and order as a precondition for investment. Similarly, those businesses engaged in the export and import of goods would not feel safe to continue with their economic activities.

Employers may reduce their workforce by terminating some of their employees. A reduction in the number of workers involves legal payment for employees for being laid off. These acts result in a range of emotions, including sadness, irritability, and anxiety. A reduction in the workforce would definitely lead to loss of income as well as a rise in unemployment. The social impact may lead to unrest, illegal and undesirable acts such as theft and crime against innocent people. The social impacts of war may include disability, death and dislocations and disappearance of individuals and separation of families.

Humanitarian crises become rampant and unavoidable in those communities where internecine conflicts are being conducted. These wars cause mass displacements of the local people who have no involvement in the wars. These communities also suffer from destruction, devastation and demolition of infrastructure, roads and rail networks, transportation and communication. The affected communities also suffer from disruption of essential services such as healthcare and education.

Those persons who used to be engaged in developmental activities become unemployed without income. In this process, the most vulnerable groups are

elders, women and children. These groups of people are particularly vulnerable to violence generated by robbers, bandits and crooks. This violence may be caused by lack of employment and support. Also displaced persons become desperate to have access to the means of survival. Persons suffering from unexpected deprivation try every means, including shoplifting and robbery for survival.

Conflicts lead to loss of lives among those engaged in it. As mentioned earlier, persons who are left unemployed may engage in conflicts to access every means for their survival. They run into conflicts in the process of securing food, shelter and other necessities of life. Conflicts cause injuries, and trauma among civilians caught in the crossfire. The shock, strain and distress that occur among persons residing in the conflict zones may not be easily diagnosed and treated.

Also, combatants suffer casualties that inculcate in them a feeling of retaliation, vengeance and retribution. These feelings may not be medically treated in the vicinity. They may have to be treated by means of referral to higher medical institutions. In these centers, a feeling of retaliation is incubated. Such reaction and sensitivity may contribute to cycles of violence, revenge and retribution. The remedial action that breaks this cycle is dialogue on issues that lead to conflicts. The best instruments of dialogue and conflict resolution in Ethiopia are the Elders. The armed fighters and others standing against the government's stance should choose negotiation and dialogue as it is the only viable means to solve the dichotomy.

Engagement in dialogue between groups that are engaged in war or conflict has immense political, economic and social benefits. This process has weight in view of the disruptive effects of war or conflict in Ethiopia. Internecine wars disrupt activities in every sector of the economy. In the agriculture sector, the farming community is forced to stop working, negatively affecting supply of grain to the market. Agricultural produces meant for export are also disrupted affecting the foreign exchange earning capacity of the country. Import of inputs for the agriculture sector, including fertilizers, improved seeds, pesticides and farm machineries is disrupted due to war and conflict. Investors are discouraged to invest in all sectors of the economy, including agriculture. All these lead to economic decline, unemployment and poverty.

War and conflict in Ethiopia also lead to displacement and dislocation of people further exacerbating economic challenges. This situation hinders development efforts of the people, leaving them to suffer from poverty. The livelihood of people residing in both rural and urban areas is further diminished. These economic challenges are only prelude to political instability in the country.

Political scientists confirm that internal conflicts undermine political stability. They lead to poor governance and weak state institutions. The public service fails to serve the people, the taxpayer, efficiently and effectively. Such failure is bound to erode public trust in the ability of these institutions to maintain peace and security in the country.

Moreover, divisions along ethnic, regional, or political lines make it difficult to achieve consensus. These factors also impede effective implementation of reforms. Moreover, interethnic conflicts exacerbate ethnic tensions. These tensions may lead to wars within and between societies in the country.

Divisions within society hamper joint development efforts for the creation of output, employment and income for the people. Where unemployment is rampant, there may be a tendency toward economic disruptions, absence of law and order. Ethnic conflicts cause lack of trust among people of the same country. Economic development plans and programs designed to build the national economy and the standard of living of the people remain on the shelves unread.

The ethnic conflict fuels mistrust and animosity between different groups of people. Such animosities are normally designed by alien powers that desire to keep Ethiopians below poverty-line due to conflicts. They also want to donate food for the poor and malnourished people to keep them addicted to donor aid. With this enticement, forces behind donors come to exploit the natural resources of the country, especially the mining sector.

Alien forces may undermine social cohesion to have free access to the natural resources of the country. These forces have their local counterparts within the country, sharing together the unlawful benefits. They make endeavors to block efforts towards unity and reconciliation that lead to economic welfare and poverty eradication in Ethiopia. These forces encourage human rights abuses in the country. They also provoke internecine wars that lead to human rights violation, neglect, aggression and hostility. Experts indicate that these forces provoke extrajudicial killings, arbitrary arrests, torture, sexual violence, and forced displacement, dislocation and outmigration.

Those forces engaged in internecine wars and conflicts may perpetrate human rights abuses. In the absence of peace, law and order, these uncontrolled elements develop the culture of impunity. They continue to engage in violations of human rights. Another factor of concern is regional instability that leads to internal conflicts in Ethiopia. It may have spillover effects, including destabilization, weakening and threatening neighboring countries and regions that used to enjoy peace and stability. It destabilizes them through cross-

border refugee flows and arms smuggling.

Simultaneously, the spread of extremist political groups and ideologies may intensify and aggravate regional tensions. These groups provoke tensions among people to exacerbate security problems and challenges. Neighboring countries tend to form their own security forces to prevent intruders from crossing borders for expanding conflicts. These conflicts may engulf regional and sub-regional armed groups that are paid by alien powers to engage in wars. These groups are created to engage in battles and combats without any threat to their economic interests.

The escalation of multifaceted internal conflicts in Ethiopia raises international concerns. Donors and aid agencies tend to prompt diplomatic interventions to maintain the status quo. They engage in peacekeeping efforts, trying to recover law and order through negotiations. Also, they try to convince major donors to continue with humanitarian assistance to Ethiopia.

However, external involvement in the guise of assistance may also complicate internal political processes. The flow of aid may be misdirected to the wrong destination, leading to donor fatigue and refusal to continue with the usual assistance. Recently, such assistance has been directed to the wrong destination outside of the country. This misuse of donor aid has forced experts to insist that addressing internecine wars requires concerted efforts to maintain law and order at multiple levels. These efforts may include political dialogue, reconciliation processes, and humanitarian assistance.

To stop internecine war and conflict in Ethiopia, it is absolutely necessary to craft a sustainable peace and stability strategy. This, however, depends on addressing the fundamental grievances registered by various communities engulfed in hostilities. This effort may require the promotion of inclusive governance and the building of resilient institutions. These institutions should be capable of managing diversity and resolving conflicts in a peaceful manner.

Social scientists confirmed that in this defective and deficient world, no society lives in absolute harmony and peace with itself and others. Peace, law and order require an enduring engagement in the prevention and resolution of clashes and disagreements. This leads to the modern craft of conflict prevention and resolution.

Even before the introduction of the modern methods of dispute resolution mechanism, Ethiopians had been using their own institutions of conflict management. These institutions are still capable of controlling and managing internecine war and conflicts if concerned people are ready to use them properly and respectfully.

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

# Editorial

## A good start for an inclusive political system

In many cases, the ultimate prosperity of a country depends on the success of building democratic system and ensuring justice and good governance among others. Building all these assets is not an easy task. It requires handwork and dedication both from the government and the people.

The existence of competent political parties will contribute to a speedy and smooth transition to an effective democratic system where justice and good governance are ensured. In other words, the building a multiparty political system determines the future of our country. If we are successful on this, then our ascension to greatness is inevitable. To realize this, a more enabling and tolerant political landscape must be ensured. The end game is clear—to create a country where its citizens thrive.

Ethiopia is a country of about 120 million people with diverse ethnic, religious and socioeconomic backgrounds. Coupled with other factors that create multiples of interests, ideas and opinions among the people, this diversity calls for the ability to accommodate them and ensure the sustainability of the country.

Multiparty political system is relatively a new development in the long history of the nation. The system which was introduced in the turning of the 1990s following the downfall of the Derg was even full of shortcomings that inhibited the proper formation, growth and participation of political parties in the political activities of the country.

By looking at the current situation of the nation one can conclude that it has not yet come out of the cold in terms of practicing multiparty system. Including the ruling Prosperity Party (PP) there are about 60 political parties legally registered and operating across the nation. PP being the biggest and most comprehensive one, the remaining are still very small, young and full of weaknesses. These limitations hold them back from properly discharging their responsibility. Some of them are aligned to ethnic groups while many others still have to struggle to stand firm as political institutions due to lack of financial, technical, membership and related drawbacks. This adds the burden of ruling the country on the incumbent party that is already shouldering the responsibility.

Recently, President of the ruling Prosperity Party (PP) Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) had gathered and held talks with representatives of political parties on ranges of issues. The meeting has enabled the representatives of the political parties to raise diverse topics of national concern.

Up on responding to the issues raised by the political party's representatives, Abiy indicated that the main reason for holding the conversation with the political parties was to gather their reflection on mutual concerns especially policy related topics. As to Abiy, political parties are supposed to have their own policies regardless of holding political power. Therefore, the government's intention was to absorb ideas and inputs from the parties which the ruling party might not have considered or might have overlooked.

Abiy further noted that his government is the first in the country to involve opposition or competing political parties in the cabinet or governmental positions. This is an import measure to empower the political parties through practically involving in the governments activities so that they can be ready to fully shoulder government responsibility any time they win election as competing parties and grab power.

One of the takeaways from the premier's conversation with representatives of political parties is that the government should uphold its stance of involving competing political parties in its cabinet as well as further continue the forum as frequently as possible to nurture political inclusiveness. The political parties should also make use of the opportunity to forward vital information, ideas, comments and policy inputs rather than solely focusing on reflecting their distinctive stance, objections ... etc.

# Opinion



## Abbay Dam: A laudable project for regional integration, electricity supply

BY ADDISALEM MULAT

It is apparent that for Egypt and Sudan the binding agreement is just the enforcement of particularly the 1959 unilateral agreement which is all about the share of whole Nile water between Egypt and Sudan alone.

That is the main agenda behind the so called binding agreement that the two nations want to achieve. So the binding agreement propagated by Egypt and Sudan and their supporters is something suicidal and vague to Ethiopia that it cannot accept forever.

It should also be noted that there is no international law that can force Ethiopia to accept. Therefore, Ethiopia has to continue its move towards completing the construction of the dam without interruption.

Now is a time to look for better options which may benefit all including Ethiopia. The only binding agreement is to work hard for the increase of fresh water in the Nile Basin by planning green economy and implementing environmental protection through dialogue and scientific means and work for mutual benefit, according to Tilahun Erduno (Dr. Ir.)

The two governments will continue until the people of Egypt and Sudan know that the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) and similar hydroelectric dam (HEP) projects have no as such negative impact on their life.

The governments of Egypt and Sudan together with their people will observe that the water reserved in the dam will operate the turbine, moderate the flow of water in Nile Basin, rescue them from flooding and reach to its final destiny Cairo and Mediterranean Sea without interruption.

Abbay Dam will allow for regulated and sustainable minimum flow levels in the dry season. It will regulate the steady water flow throughout the year and it will avoid unexpected flooding to downstream countries. Regarding energy and power production, the dam will allow underperforming downstream hydropower schemes to perform more effectively as there will be more reliable sediment free, and regular availability of water throughout the year. Indeed, the dam will benefit Sudan and Egypt immensely by delivering steady water flow throughout the year. Besides reducing floods in the downstream countries, projects like GERD are also vital for connecting the region with electric grid, as obtained from research outcomes.

It is obvious that since the laying of the cornerstone for the construction of the Abbay Dam, Ethiopians residing at home and abroad have been partaking in the construction of the dam more than ever before. Following their active involvement and the commitment of the federal government of Ethiopia, the colossal

project is going to see the light of day.

On the heels of their active participation in the construction of the dam, the whole thing has been heading in the right direction.

The Office of the National Council for the Coordination of Public Participation to the Construction of the Abbay Dam Director General Aregawi Berhie (PhD) told the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that the public supports the building of the iconic dam financially, professionally, and in other ways.

While some 10 million Birr has been secured from the public to the iconic dam in the SMS scheme in each month, the non-financial support also remains strong. Noting the boost in the public-government coordination for the execution of the Abbay Dam, Aregawi (PhD) indicated that continued public support to the iconic dam showcases how Ethiopians are really eager to support developmental projects. The project is nearing to the completion owing to the robust partnership of the government and all segments of the society.

Since Ethiopia is Africa's most mountainous country, every drop of its rain water rushes outside the country. Furthermore, Ethiopia is a land locked country sharing boundary with a wide spectrum of independent states. On the other hand, Egypt is a country utilizing the Nile water alone and more than 60% of its territory is bounded with Mediterranean, Red Sea and Suez Canal waters. What is more, Egypt is known for its abundant underground water and many lakes.

The approach used to build the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam is a big lesson that serves as a model for African nations grappling with poverty, Deputy Prime Minister Temesgen Tiruneh said, as information obtained from a local media.

The deputy premier made the above remark at the commemoration of the 13th Anniversary of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam held in Addis Ababa. He pointed out that despite the enormous challenges Ethiopia faced, it was able to safeguard its rights to conceive, design, finance, and construct the dam. "This approach serves as a pioneering and exemplary model for nations across our continent grappling with poverty," Temesgen stressed. The anniversary celebrated under the theme: "Together We Can" featured a series of events, including panel discussions and a photo exhibition.

Deputy PM Temesgen Tiruneh on the occasion lauded the unified efforts of the government and the public in overcoming significant challenges over the past thirteen years.

The construction of GERD has now reached an impressive 95.8 percent milestone, and Ethiopia resolutely upheld the principle of African Solutions to African Problems on the global stage, he recalled.

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



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# Business & Economy



Export standard sesame seed

## Oilseeds' invaluable economic contribution

BY MENGESHA AMARE

Having housed the majority of agrarian society, Ethiopia has been practicing agriculture to have crop production, animal husbandry, apiculture, horticulture, fishery and the likes. Clearly, the agriculture sector in the country is being widely exercised across the nation taking advantage of the fertile and arable acre of land.

Of the myriads of crop production, oilseeds are given due emphasis to help the country be beneficiary out of this subsector. Cognizant of the fact that oilseeds are of significantly useful in supporting the nation to beef up economic growth apart from securing foreign currency, *The Ethiopian Herald* had a stay with Tadesse Birru, who graduated in Agricultural economics from Addis Ababa University. He said, "Oilseeds are expected to play an increasing role in future food supply. Even though the species are diverse, interestingly there are many varieties which possess potentials for food production. Various seeds are generally rich in lipids and provide the major part of oil and fat needs of the populations."

As to Tadesse, major conventional edible vegetables' oils and fats are generally provided by sunflower, peanut, palm kernel, and others using traditional and industrial processes. As the lack of suitable conservation methods for the local oilseeds before processing limits the opportunity for export, Ethiopia has to well embark on ways to preserve oilseeds production from A to Z.

In large-scale production, refined oils are produced through development projects from raw materials using industrial operations. Besides, the edible oils obtained have to meet the requirements of urban consumers such as bland flavor and odor, clear appearance, light color, stability to oxidation, and suitability for frying, he added.

As to him, agricultural products are used for local consumption and export to abroad. The main exportable agricultural products include: coffee, oilseeds, cereals, gold, khat, live animals, fruits, hides and skin and vegetables constitute the highest components of the Ethiopian export trade. Oilseeds are the second largest export earner for the country next to coffee.

"Coffee, oilseeds, Khat, and pulses are the

main export products, of course. Oilseed crops are mainly used for the production of oil, which is being an important source of fatty acids. A lower production of oilseeds is a major problem that could be associated with the impact of various biotic and abiotic pressures."

Tadesse further elucidated that edible vegetable oils and other oil seeds are used for food purpose. These products supplement or replace animal products like butter and lard, supplies of which are inadequate to meet the needs of an ever-increasing population. On the other side, oilseed meals are rich in protein; mixed with other ingredients like cereal grains, which provide nutritionally balanced feeds.

Since, Oilseeds are the second export earner of Ethiopia, their promotion can substantially contribute a lot to the economic development at family, regional, and even national levels. They are considered as high value export products by the Ethiopian government. They are energy dense foods due to high content and being source of fiber, vitamins like vitamin E, and minerals such as phosphorus, iron, and magnesium, he said.

True, oil seed production is of paramount importance in boosting the socioeconomic progress of the society and bolstering business relations and entrepreneurial initiations.

"Agriculture is the mainstay of the Ethiopian economy. Its share accounts for more than 45% of the total GDP, 50% of foreign currency earnings and above 84% of employment creation. Besides, both industry and services are dependent on the performance of agriculture, which provides raw materials, generates foreign currency for the import of essential inputs and food for the fast growing population," he opined.

The Ethiopian government has indicated that the oilseeds sesame seed, niger seed, and safflower seed are high-priority export crops. Sesame, generating the largest foreign currency second to coffee, its export performance has been fluctuating due to varying reasons, he added.

Yes, coffee and oilseed are the main products and exportable commodities in Ethiopia; these products sourced from local producers and there is very little attention to the producers at the country level, as to him.

Ethiopia has an attractive portfolio of high

value specialty oilseeds for export markets. It is in the top 5 producing countries for sesame seed, linseed and niger seed, and oilseeds are all in all a mainstay of the rural and national economy in Ethiopia.

According to Tadesse, growth and improvement of the oilseed sector can substantially contribute to the economic development at national, regional level and family level. Since the oilseeds chain is fragmented and many smallholders and middlemen are involved, the country has to coordinate efforts with a view to decreasing inefficiency and beef up productivity.

Oilseeds are grown mainly for the extraction of vegetable oils and for its by-products needed in livestock feed and in other industrial uses he said adding that the oils obtained from them are becoming a staple food used in daily cooking in several countries, and as a result the world demand is constantly increasing.

Combined with the exponential increase in the world population and other cyclical factors, the world demand for oilseeds is leading to a surge pricing, especially in oil importing countries. True, he added that the high dependence on imported vegetable oils and oilseed products has a detrimental effect on the economy of some countries and weighs heavily on their trade balance. Considering their increasingly important role in society, the development of a local oilseed sector to reduce Ethiopia's dependence on imports and cope with the vagaries of global markets should never be overlooked in the current context of sustainable agriculture and food sovereignty. Hence, the country needs to well focus on the production and productivity of oil seeds.

Oil seeds have varied uses in our day to day lives such as food source, manufacturing of household cooking fats and even have medicinal value as well as for manufacturing of bio-fuels.

"Oilseed crops have been the backbone of several agricultural economics from antiquity and play a prominent role in agricultural industries and trade throughout Ethiopia, the continent of Africa and the world as well. A major amount of edible oil comes from these crop resources," he added.

"Farmers encounter challenges such as water scarcity and ineffective irrigation methods, leading to adverse effects on oilseed

crop yields. Enhancing farmers' access to financial resources and markets, along with adopting modern agricultural machinery and techniques, can contribute to the overall improvement of oilseed crop production and economic augment in the country. The government is advised to offer special incentives to oilseed producing farmers to encourage the cultivation of non-traditional oilseed crops such as sesame and other related oil palms," he opined.

Once harvested, oilseeds are stored for some time before transported to the extraction facility. Inorganic and organic impurities accumulated during harvesting, storing and transporting must be removed before the extraction process can begin including contaminants like leaves and stems, shells, dirt, stones, cloth, woodchips, metal, glass so as to keep the quality of the oilseed production.

Yes, he said oilseeds must also be sorted to remove imperfect or diseased oilseeds, pests before extraction. Ethiopia's total oilseeds production in marketing is forecast to increase by manifolds if the sector is made to grow well thereby helping the nation benefit out of the subsector as it deserves.

He said, "The Ethiopian oilseed industry is an important economic driver for both our agriculture and agri-food sectors. Oilseeds are primarily grown for their oil content, and the total oilseeds production. Oilseeds are recognized by industry for its good stability during cooking and its nutritional attributes."

One of the major trends in the oilseed processing sector in the country is optimizing the nutritional value of oils by increasing the content in oil and in family diet. It is known to be highly heat and drought tolerant, and could therefore be a potential oilseed crop for the dry Ethiopian prairie.

As to him, the economic importance of oilseeds in Ethiopia has possessed a vast area for oilseeds production; the oil extracted from oilseeds constitutes an important part of people's diet as edible oils. It is also used as raw material for manufacturing various items of economic importance such as varnishes, soaps, cosmetic items, medicinal items, lubricants, perfumes, etc. Besides, the residue of edible oilseeds forms an important part of cattle feed and manure and the oil industry offers employment to thousands of millions of citizens across the nation.

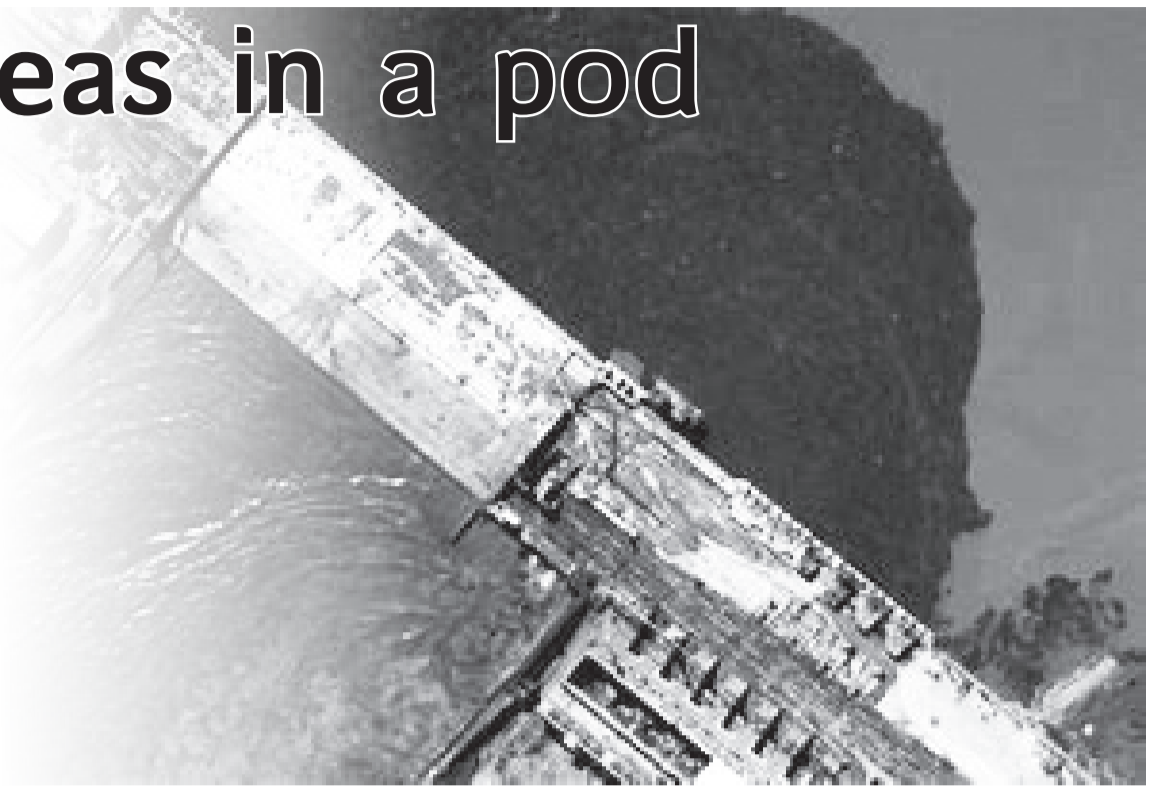
# Art & Culture

## Two peas in a pod

BY ALEM HAILU G/KRISTOS

In a way  
Description that defy  
The power-thirsty Ethiopia  
Uturning fate  
Far beyond its perimeter  
It is due the continent  
To electrify,  
Besides,  
To the support-denied  
But resource-blessed  
Countries, bootstrapping  
To exemplify.  
Also, to typify  
With all-out push  
Citizens could realize  
A grand win-win dam  
Of a gargantuan size.  
Moreover,  
To turnout  
A standard bearer  
Of conspiracies  
And negative influences

That managed to abort  
Such as strings attached to  
Development-related support.  
As per SDG's goal  
Ethiopia's intention  
Is common growth  
Through industrialization  
And economic integration  
Rallying behind it all  
In the set 'kindred soul'.  
Peace and development  
Two peas in a pod  
Cross fertilize  
That fact  
African should realize.  
If Africa turns its horn  
To its development arm  
That will signify  
In store no harm,  
To its inhabitants  
Africa will proffer  
Unconstrained charm.  
On the flip side,  
The presence of serenity



Is an ingredient  
For ensuring  
A prosperous identity.  
Ethiopia  
An energy powerhouse  
Peace, development

Environment stewardship  
Does espouse,  
No doubt  
In the not distant future  
It will be  
The region's penthouse.



## THE YOUNG MAN and THE OLD MAN

BY CHIMA DICKSON

A story with a valuable lesson.  
An old man met a young man and asked him,  
"How many friends do you have?"  
The young man replied,  
"I have five friends."  
The old man then asked,  
"How close are you to them?"  
The young man replied,  
"We are very close friends. They are there for

me during both good times and bad, listening to me and enjoy spending time with me. They are people I rely on and can trust completely."  
The old man asked again,  
"What do you usually do with your friends?"  
The young man answered,  
"We always hang out together at the parties and go out together. We like to visit the mall and buy things extravagantly. We also like getting together at one another's houses to chat, watch sports and movies, drink alcohol and smoke cigarettes, eat a lot of food and talk about beautiful girls."

The old man paused for a moment, then said,  
"Listen, I want you to get serious about your life goals. Life is too short to waste time on things that don't matter. Make a promise to me and to yourself that from tomorrow onwards, you will look at yourself as a financial asset. Investing in yourself will pay off in the future. Your skills, knowledge, and experience are the biggest asset you have. Set clear goals, create a plan, work hard, and stay adaptable."

The young man thought for a while, then promised to finally become serious about his future. Five months later, the old man met him again and asked,

"How many friends do you have now?"

The young man replied,

"None."

The old man then asked,

"Why? What happened to your five friends?"

The young man whistled,

"They all left me, and I don't know why?"

The old man smiled for a moment, and said,

"That's how life is. It is commonly stated that when you become serious about your life and goals, you lose many friends. That's why a Bugatti has two seats and a bus has thirty. I'm glad you're becoming a Bugatti, and no longer a bus..."

It is important to remember that not all your friends will be supportive of your ambitions and goals. The moment you choose to start making progress in life, they become uninterested and begin to avoid you. Some may even be jealous of your progress and attempt to stifle it. It may be best to let them go if they cannot accept and support you for who you are and what you want to achieve. Do not worry about losing friends when you are in pursuit of your goal, success and happiness. Remember that you want to become a Bugatti, so you shouldn't be afraid of having a few seats.

*the Poet  
and  
the Poem*

## The Poet

BY GEDION CELAS

The poet is  
a philosopher  
writing divine mysteries  
from a world  
unknown to mankind.  
The poet is  
an instrument of words  
given to him  
by his muse  
beyond the compulsion of  
his finite intellect.  
He writes in obscure images  
and symbolism even to fool  
his own intellect;  
he utters great and immortal  
philosophies  
which he himself cannot comprehend.  
He is the ocean but not the ocean;  
he is just the living wave singing  
his love songs on many shores of the  
ocean  
going and coming until his soul return  
to Thee.  
The poet is a noble soul  
born into this world  
to sustain a divine task  
given to his soul  
since before his birth

### Corrigendum

A poem review entitled Who Died Homesick was published in the Ethiopian Herald on 22 June 2022. The poem at the beginning of the article (actually titled "Without Scabbard") was a translation by Mitiku Adisu of Solomon Deressa's poem. ጸሎጵጵ.  
The translated version was originally published in Ethiopia Observer (January 26, 2019). The translator's name was not attributed. Let it be known that the translator's name should have been included. We apologize for the oversight mistake.

# Indepth

## Peace journalism:

### Right prescription to Ethiopia's current situation

BY DAGMAWIT HADGU

In modern democracies, the media holds a revered position as the “fourth estate,” signifying its pivotal role as a check on the three traditional branches of government: the legislative, executive, and judiciary. Acting as a vigilant watchdog, it scrutinizes their actions, policies, and decisions, thereby upholding transparency, accountability, and the public's right to information. This esteemed status underscores the media's indispensable function in fostering an informed citizenry and safeguarding democratic principles.

However, the efficacy of the media as the fourth estate is contingent upon its ability to operate independently, free from undue influence or coercion. Press freedom is essential for ensuring that journalists can fulfill their duty to serve as society's watchdogs without fear of reprisal or censorship. Therefore, safeguarding the freedom of the press is paramount for upholding the integrity of democratic institutions and preserving the public's right to know.

Related to press freedom, the founding father and the third president of America Thomas Jefferson Ones said *“Were it left to me to decide whether we should have a government without a newspaper, or newspaper without a government, I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the later. But I should mean that every man should receive those papers and be capable of reading them”*

This quote underscores the pivotal role of a free media in providing information, scrutinizing those in power, and fostering transparency and accountability. This perspective emphasizes that a vibrant and independent press is indispensable for the maintenance of a healthy democracy, as it empowers citizens to participate effectively and make informed decisions about their governance.

In this case, the responsibility of the media goes beyond merely reporting events; it extends to offering accurate and quality information grounded in reality. Effective coverage involves identifying the root causes of conflicts, acting as a watchdog to ensure accountability, reducing communal differences, clarifying the political landscape, and addressing historical grievances that fuel discord.

Unquestionably, the media can exercise important influence, but it also has the potential to be a destructive weapon when it disseminates misinformation, propagates hate speech, sensationalizing or diverts attention from critical issues while exhibiting bias. The Rwandan

genocide stands as a stark illustration of these potential ramifications.

During the genocide, media outlets played a devastating role by not only spreading propaganda that dehumanized the minority group but also by directly inciting violence against them. In this instance, the media exacerbated ethnic tensions and fueled the atrocities that ensued. This tragic episode leads to catastrophic consequences such as genocide of an estimated 800,000 to 1 million people in just 100 days, where the media became complicit in one of the darkest chapters of human history.

And, the negative role of the media has even got worse particularly, in an era marked by rapid technological advancements and the proliferation of digital media, the role of the media has expanded beyond traditional boundaries. With the rise of social media platforms and online news outlets, information dissemination has become more decentralized, empowering citizens to actively participate in the public discourse. However, the rise of the new media also presents challenges, including the spread of misinformation, disinformation, and hate speech, wide spread of citizen journalists and the erosion of trust in traditional media sources.

Studies shows that social media platforms like Twitter, Gab, Facebook, GitHub from total of 451,709 sentences of these, 371,452 sentences are classified as hate speech, while 80,250 are categorized as non-hate speech. These problems will be worsened in developing countries like Ethiopia.

Ethiopia proclaimed Hate Speech and Disinformation Prevention and Suppression Proclamation 1185/2020 with the aim of Controlling and suppressing the dissemination and proliferation of hate speech, disinformation and other related false and misleading information with a liability from simple imprisonment not exceeding two years or a fine not exceeding 100,000 birr,

However, in addition to government regulations controlling social media require a multi-faceted approach involving, platform policies, technological solutions, and societal efforts to promote tolerance and understanding.

In the past years; the country has grappled with widespread protests, conflicts, and anti-governmental activities, resulting in heightened political, economic, and social tensions across various regions. During such tumultuous times, the media's portrayal of such events significantly shapes the perceptions of citizens, from high-ranking government officials to

ordinary individuals. Although, the media possess the potential to facilitate peace and understanding among disputing parties, their coverage can also exacerbate the situation.

However, Ethiopian media houses have fallen short in harnessing peace journalism as a tool for conflict resolution and peacebuilding.

Scholars consistently characterize Ethiopian mass media as highly polarized, with both private and government-owned outlets framing facts to align with specific political viewpoints or ideologies. This polarization not only reinforces existing beliefs but also widens the gap between the private and government media sectors. Several factors contribute to this polarization, including ownership, financial funding, politicization, and the regulatory environment of the media landscape

This disparity is glaringly evident in coverage of intrastate conflicts in the northern and Oromia regions of the country, exacerbating tensions and hindering efforts towards reconciliation. Studies show that since 2019 the Ethiopian media became highly polarized as never before.

In fact, the introduction and wide spread adoption of peace journalism could serve as a catalyst for peacebuilding and democratic development in Ethiopia. By adopting a more balanced and constructive approach to reporting, media outlets can contribute positively to conflict resolution efforts and foster a culture of dialogue and understanding among diverse communities. In essence, the widespread adoption of peace journalism holds immense potential to alleviate tensions and promote sustainable peace in Ethiopia.

The founder of the notion peace journalism (PJ), Norwegian scholar Galtung argues framing the information in a certain way can provide opportunities for nonviolent responses to conflicts. It is a broader, fairer and more accurate way of framing stories, drawing on the insights of conflict analysis and transformation.

Especially peace journalism has a crucial role in developing and diverse countries such as Ethiopia. This type of journalism offers an alternative approach to traditional conflict reporting by focusing on constructive and solution-oriented narratives.

In developing and diverse countries where conflicts are often complex and deeply rooted, peace journalism can play a crucial role in promoting dialogue, understanding, and reconciliation, empowering local voices. It empowers

communities to address underlying causes of conflict and build a more peaceful and inclusive future.

The Colombian peace process serves as a compelling example of the media's pivotal contribution through peace journalism. Across various fronts including public awareness and engagement, facilitating dialogue and reconciliation, humanizing victims and combatants, monitoring accountability, and challenging misinformation and polarization, the media played a vital role in shaping the trajectory of the peace negotiations.

Firstly, the media played a crucial role in raising public awareness and fostering engagement among Colombian citizens. Through comprehensive coverage and analysis, media outlets ensured that the public was well-informed about the peace process and its implications. This heightened awareness empowered citizens to actively participate in discussions surrounding peace, fostering a sense of ownership and investment in the outcome.

Moreover, the media played a critical role in humanizing victims and combatants, amplifying their stories and experiences. Through personal narratives and interviews, journalists shed light on the human cost of the conflict, fostering empathy and solidarity among Colombians and underscoring the urgent need for reconciliation and healing.

Despite the challenges and setbacks encountered, the media's steadfast contributions played an instrumental role in creating an environment conducive to negotiation, reconciliation, and ultimately, the signing of a historic peace agreement in 2016. Through their commitment to peace journalism principles, journalists helped shape Colombia's path towards lasting peace and reconciliation.

Ethiopian media can learn valuable lessons from Colombian media during the peace process, including the importance of neutral and balanced reporting, facilitating dialogue and reconciliation, humanizing victims and combatants, monitoring accountability, and challenging misinformation and polarization. By adopting these principles, Ethiopian media can play a constructive role in promoting peace, reconciliation, and democracy in Ethiopia.

**(DAGMAWIT HADGU IS A LECTURER AT UNIVERSITY OF GONDAR AND MA HOLDER IN JOURNALISM)**



## Law & Politics

# Countering online hate speech through strict legal measures

BY EYUEL KIFLU

Our planet is currently facing a multitude of challenges, both man-made and natural. Some of the most pressing issues that many people are currently experiencing are the widespread famine, drought, and war. Such problems are interconnected as we can see from our way of living that anything can cause significant harm to anyone from anywhere. The ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine could be a textbook example to show how a global issue can harm people far beyond their borders.

On top of that and to make matters worse, social media platforms are creating a worst-case scenario regarding dividing and disrupting the unity and togetherness of people. These platforms are used intelligently by people from around the world to spread fake news and hate speech that have the power to exacerbate conflicts, intensify destruction caused by war, and incur hostility and hatred among people who were once living together.

These days, hate speech has become a prominent global issue, particularly in developing countries where unresolved conflicts and development challenges abound. In Ethiopia, for example, hate speech incidents had been widely exercised following the outbreak of the conflict in northern Ethiopia, as reported by the Ethiopian Media Authority (EMA). Facebook has been identified as the primary platform for the dissemination of hate speech in Ethiopia. The country has seen a rise in social media users, with an estimated user base of over 7 million on Facebook alone. Other platforms, such as YouTube, TikTok, and Telegram, are also popular, especially for video-based content.

In an interview with *The Ethiopian Herald*, Communication Affairs Executive Officer of the EMA Abdu Ali revealed that Facebook has over 7 million users in Ethiopia, with the number of social media users steadily rising. He stressed the importance of responsible social media usage, highlighting that these platforms can easily become sources of hate speech and misinformation, deviating from their intended purpose. The irresponsible use of social media poses a significant threat to countries like Ethiopia.

In response to the varying responsibilities of social media companies in dealing with hate speech, Abdu mentioned that the EMA engaged in discussions with Facebook based on their guidelines regarding hate speech. The objective of these discussions has been to establish guidelines for Facebook's operations within the country, in a manner aligning with community's guidelines. Consequently, an agreement was reached to monitor the dissemination of fake information and hate speeches on the platform and ensure timely responses.



Facebook has made noteworthy changes in recent years to comply with Ethiopia's proclamation, which mandates the removal of content containing fake information or hate speech within 24 hours.

Abdu emphasized that preventing hate speech is a collective responsibility involving media organizations, government bodies, universities, and society at large. The EMA is actively working to enhance media literacy, particularly among university and high school students. Additionally, the Authority has established a dedicated hotline to receive reports of hate speech from the public, enabling them to take appropriate action in collaboration with social media companies.

The other way round, in an exclusive interview with *The Ethiopian Herald*, Technology and Society Researcher Berhan Taye expressed concerns about the lack of accountability and implementation despite existing laws against hate speech and the dissemination of fake information. She drew attention to the detrimental effect of social media on Ethiopia since 2018, when the incumbent came into power. Berhan linked social media to the conflicts in Tigray, Oromia, and Amhara, emphasizing that these conflicts were organized, funded, and fueled online, primarily through platforms like Facebook, Telegram, and WhatsApp groups.

According to her, the impact of social media on the conflicts in Ethiopia has been significant and negative, exacerbating violence and worsening the situation.

In terms of regulation, Berhan argued that every country has a responsibility to regulate social media platforms, similar to how media and utility providers are regulated. She urged the Ethiopian government, joining hands with civil society organizations and the media, to proactively regulate these platforms and ensure the removal of content inciting violence. While Ethiopia has laws

addressing social media and hate speech, Berhan criticized their ineffectiveness and highlighted instances where these laws were misused to suppress dissenting voices, opposition groups, and journalists, rather than addressing the root cause of the problem.

Berhan called for holding social media companies accountable for their negative impact on Ethiopia, emphasizing the need for decisive action, such as the removal of problematic content and penalties for accounts that violate policies. This would require investing in content moderation, language expertise, and employing human moderators.

In addition to platform regulation, Berhan stressed the necessity of a comprehensive approach that includes education. This education should focus on media literacy, digital literacy, and addressing underlying societal issues. It is important to recognize that while Facebook itself does not turn individuals into bigots or racists, it is the people and their actions that contribute to the problem.

Therefore, a deeper examination is required to understand why there is an abundance of online content advocating for the killing and persecution of ethnic groups in the country. Berhan emphasized the need for the ministries of Education, Justice, and Peace to actively engage in finding answers to these societal questions.

While platform regulation is necessary, Berhan also stresses the importance of addressing the root causes of national cohesion issues and social fragmentation. This includes addressing conflicts, promoting national unity, and ensuring freedom of movement within the country. The government and relevant ministries should work together to find solutions and involve the public in the process.

Regarding the country's law Assistant Attorney General of the Legal Education Training Directorate in the Ministry of Justice Mesfin Mekonnen said that Proclamation 1185/12 defines hate speech as the deliberate dissemination of false information targeting individuals, ethnic groups, or religions. Acts such as insulting or humiliating individuals based on their characteristics or inciting violence against them are considered hate speech. While Ethiopia does not have specific laws directly addressing hate speech, there are indirect laws prohibiting such speech.

The country's constitution guarantees freedom of speech, but this freedom is restricted if it harms individuals or groups or affects human rights or other public interests. Criminal laws, including the Computer Crime Proclamation 958/2008, address hate speech and crimes related to computers. Perpetrators can face imprisonment for spreading hate speech or content that incites violence or conflict among communities.

Mesfin emphasizes the need for effective implementation of the law, taking into account the influence of social media, technological capabilities, and public awareness. He suggests that the government should pressurize social media companies to operate in accordance with the country's laws and international guidelines, ensuring regulation and oversight.

In conclusion, addressing the challenges of hate speech on social media requires a comprehensive approach involving education, platform regulation, and addressing underlying societal issues. It is crucial for governments, relevant ministries, civil society organizations, and social media companies to collaborate in finding solutions and implementing effective measures to combat hate speech and its harmful consequences.

# Women in Focus

## NBE's aspiring initiative to bridge gender gap in financial sector

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

Recent data shows that Ethiopia is struggling with a widening gender gap in financial inclusion which poses a challenge to foster growth and equity. Despite significant strides toward financial inclusion, women continue to face substantial barriers to equal participation and advancement in the financial sector.

In 2016, the government of Ethiopia had developed the National Financial Inclusion Strategy (NFIS), whose implementation period ended in 2020. The strategy was again updated for 2021–2025 by setting ambitious targets.

Since closing this gender gap is a key priority to National Bank of Ethiopia (NBE), it has recently launched the Network of Ethiopia's Women in Finance (NEWFin) which is said to transform the landscape of the Ethiopian financial industry by empowering women to ascend to leadership roles, thereby driving gender equality and economic growth.

This pioneering initiative that is designed to bridge the gender gap in leadership within Ethiopia's financial sector and foster women's financial inclusion, envisions a financial industry that empowers women, enabling them to thrive as leaders, and actively promotes gender equality.

Its mission is centered on dismantling the barriers that impede women's progress within the financial sector, cultivating a nurturing environment that propels their advancement.

At the launching ceremony, NBE Governor Mamo Mihretu stated that the initiative would help to address the issue of access to finance, and contribute to women's economic empowerment nationwide.

"NEWFin is a commitment to transforming the financial sector which truly empowers women and enables them to thrive as leaders and drive gender equality."

He indicated that the initiative seeks to address the barriers of women in career, progression and representation in leadership roles through targeted actions, skill training, networking, mentorship programs and advocacy for gender inclusive policy.

"The underrepresentation of women in the financial sector both in the demand, and supply sides, is not merely a matter of equity but it is a matter of efficiency, sustainability, sound policy and public confidence."

On the demand side, addressing the gender gap in account ownership, and access to capital can bring tangible results to both financial institutions and to the wider economy.

Researches consistently show that organizations with diverse leadership outperform their peers with reputability, innovation and risk management, he said. In Ethiopia, women currently hold 11 to



15 of senior management positions across financial institutions which hinder collective growth.

Moreover, the social structure including the working environment makes it also difficult for women to balance work and life. So, many of them are forced to choose one of the others, he stressed.

In response, the second national financial inclusion strategy is gender intentional which not only mainstreams action and achieving gender equality in financial services but also includes a dedicated action program with seven priority actions and initiatives aimed at enhancing women's access to finance.

He further highlighted the launching and implementation of the first financial inclusion strategy marked a historical milestone which helped double financial inclusion levels. In 2014, 22 percent of the population had an account, this increased to an estimated 45 percent in 2020 and more than 50 percent in 2022.

However, one of the areas where the first strategy did not make progress was in women's financial inclusion. Thus, the second strategy noted the widening gap between men and women in financial inclusion.

"The mission of closing the gender gap in the financial sector is a defining and key priority for NBE. Thus, we are dedicated to fostering an environment where women's voices are heard as well as shaping the future of Ethiopia in the financial sector," he underscored.

The establishment of NEWFin is a direct response to these challenges, aimed at supporting women's full participation and advancement within this vital industry.

"NEWFin is dedicated to providing avenues for achieving work-life balance, challenging societal norms, and fostering mentorship and coaching connections, ensuring that women have the support and opportunities needed to succeed."

Upholding the core values of equality, empowerment, collaboration, integrity, growth, and leadership, it advocates for

equal opportunities for all, fostering a collaborative and inclusive environment that welcomes diverse perspectives and experiences.

This foundation of principles guides NEWFin in its commitment to championing the cause of women in the financial industry, aiming for a future where gender parity is not just an aspiration but a reality, he emphasized.

ZamZam Bank CEO Melika Bedri noted that NEWFin is a big initiative taken by the NBE which not only targets addressing the gender gap of women but also promotes inclusive policies in all terms.

Melika, also appointed as the Chairperson of the Board of Directors of NEWFin, further indicated that NEWFin is a transformative platform fostering a supportive community that promotes professional development and advocates for gender equality within the financial sector.

Its strategic framework is built upon six pillars, Advancement and Career Development, Advocacy and Community Engagement, Networking and Collaboration, Growth and Sustainability, Partnership, and Visibility and Branding.

World Bank Group, Head of Africa, Gender Innovation Lab (GIL), Michael O'sullivan on his part highlighted that WBG's data has shown a growing financial inclusion in Ethiopia in the last several years.

The WBG has been working with the National Bank of Ethiopia team and other pertinent actors to help accelerate this process.

"Letting more women to have a seat at the table when it comes to making decisions around the financial sector, is critical."

He further stressed that the initiative is vital to expand and deepen the network of women leaders within management positions across financial institutions.

Apart from recruiting members, establishing a secretariat, and implementing its strategic plan, the initiative includes networking forums, workshops, mentorship programs, and advocacy initiatives aimed at promoting

gender diversity and inclusion within the financial sector.

By increasing the visibility and influence of women in finance, NEWFin contributes to the overall growth and success of female professionals in the industry and accelerates women's economic empowerment in Ethiopia, as to her.

Besides the aforementioned initiatives and strategy, the National Bank of Ethiopia has also been implementing various programs to transform the Ethiopian financial industry through empowering women.

Regarding this issue, NBE's Bank Supervision Director Firezer Ayalew stated that NBE has carried out knowledge based assessment in collaboration with development partners in order to identify and address the challenge with regard to financial inclusion.

Subsequent to the assessment that NBE undertook, a women's intervention framework has been developed and it is expected to be implemented at national and state level, according to him.

Besides ensuring that the financial system is inclusive as well as stable, the second national financial inclusion strategy, which has been implemented by NBE, aspires to bring about significant change in scaling up what has been gained in the first strategy as well as enhance its sustainability.

Firezer further stated that a target has been set in terms of enhancing the representation of women in the leadership position in financial institutions. "Without ensuring this, it would be difficult to unlock the potential of women, create jobs, and realize economic growth," he added.

In this regard, the role of the government and NBE is to make sure that women are adequately and fairly represented in those positions in the financial industry.

Underlining the need to have adequate representation of women in leadership roles, he stressed that NBE encourages financial institutions to include the issue of gender, adopt different systems as well as revisit their business model.

# Society

## 13 years of unwavering public commitment

BY LEULSEGED WORKU

The Abbay Hydro Dam - the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) that has been under construction for about thirteen years is a monumental project for Ethiopians and their source of pride. Located in the Benishangul-Gumuz State, east of the border of Sudan, the Dam is the largest hydroelectric plant in Africa which will have crucial significance in strengthening cooperation and regional integration in addition to generating power and lessening the burden of energy shortage at national level.

The construction of the Dam faced many challenges. The project was also met with skepticism and criticism from various entities. However, despite these obstacles, Ethiopians have joined their hands and continued to push forward to the construction of the Dam with a vision of not only benefiting from the hydroelectric power but also from regional economic integration.

Ethiopian engineers and workers supported by international partners have overcome various challenges in the construction process, including diplomatic complexities. What is more, the technological advancement witnessed during the construction of the Dam is one peculiar aspect of the project. The various cutting-edge technology and engineering expertise applied to construct the Dam proves nation's dedication to realize one of the greatest Dam in the world.

The construction of the Dam has mobilized almost all sections of the society. Every Ethiopian has left his/her fingerprint to its success. This is in the form of direct financial support, actively engaging in public diplomacy and participating in labor intensive activities such as irrigation and soil preservation activities.

Within the last thirteen years, the project has been a source of pride and unity for many Ethiopians and Ethiopia lovers, who see it as a way to bring economic prosperity and cultivate a sense of "I can do" mentality. After thirteen years of construction, GERD stands as a symbol of Ethiopian ingenuity, determination and unity; all Ethiopians are still actively participating to see the final stage of the dam which is to be finalized soon.

Melaku Demessew, is among those Ethiopians who have been unceasingly contributing his share for the successful accomplishment of the Dam. This reporter had a chance to meet Melaku who happened to be at the exhibition that was organized by the Office of National Coordination for the Construction of the Dam. When asked his feelings about the past thirteen years that witnessed ups and downs while constructing the Dam, he said that GERD is an emblem of every Ethiopian. For this reason, the hurdles and the success witnessed within the past thirteen years are obvious for it is a mega project. Within the past thirteen years,



**The journey towards realizing this monumental project has been marked by challenges and triumphs, reflecting the spirit of unity and dedication that defined Ethiopia's quest for progress and development**

the country has seen both political and economic challenges and transformation. However, none of them had halted the construction of the Dam. This reflects how Ethiopians are committed to realize their vision.

Regarding his reflection and expectation about the completion of the Dam, Melkau said, the completion of the GERD marks a significant milestone for Ethiopia and the continent as a whole. It is a testament to other African countries that what can be achieved when people come together to work towards a common goal.

According to him, Ethiopia had once been among those great ancient nations that had a great influence in the region. This is because of the fact that it had strong leaders and its people had common goals. In this regard, the Dam represents a new era of progress and prosperity for this generation and signals to other African countries the power of unity to achieve common goals.

"GERD is a testament to what can be achieved when a nation comes together to work towards a common goal. The Dam represents a new era of progress and prosperity for Ethiopia, and serves as an example of what we can accomplish with determination, hard work and perseverance."

According to Melaku, the Dam is now at the verge of its final stage. And the pledge he made to support the project will keep its pace by all means till he witnesses its final stage.

Indeed, starting from the day the cornerstone of the Dam was laid; Ethiopians have been showing unreserved effort for the successful accomplishment of the Dam. This spirit is still intact. The Office of the National Coordination for the Construction of the Dam, Public Relations and Communication Director, Hailu Abraham, told *The Ethiopian Herald* that Ethiopians have been displaying their commitment and perseverance to the successful accomplishment of the Dam starting from the project was launched thirteen years ago.

"The public have been showing unwavering support over the last years in the form of direct contribution of money, buying bonds, participating fund raising programs or in other means. This support is not limited to only Ethiopians living in the country. The Diaspora community also partakes actively in all the support."

Within the past 13 years a total of over 19 Billion Birr was collected from the public through various means. According to him, the Dam has mobilized almost all sections of the society. The Diaspora community, students, farmers and other

members of the society were aggressively supporting the Dam. Those who could not directly contribute money have shown their commitment by engaging in labor intensive activities. This is especially true for farmers and pastoralists who actively participated in irrigation and other related activities.

Public diplomacy is the other area of unreserved effort towards the successful accomplishment of the dam was seen. According to the Director, various diplomatic teams that had been established by the Ethiopian diplomatic delegation have their own contribution for the successful accomplishment of the Dam. Beside the diplomatic team, the whole Ethiopians were ambassadors to their country. This is especially true for the Diaspora community who played a significant role in promoting Ethiopia's agenda towards the Dam in the form of peaceful demonstration and standing guard to the interest of Ethiopia.

According to Hailu, this public support to the Dam is still intact and the public is still showing an enthusiastic interest for its successful accomplishment. True, the commitment of Ethiopians to the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam over the past 13 years exemplifies their determination. The journey towards realizing this monumental project has been marked by challenges and triumphs, reflecting the spirit of unity and dedication that defined Ethiopia's quest for progress and development.

Ethiopia's commitment to the Dam has been tested by ongoing negotiations with downstream countries, including Egypt and Sudan. Through diplomatic channels and multilateral forums, Ethiopia has sought to address concerns, uphold its rights to utilize its water resources, and promote cooperation for their sustainable management of the river.

As the GERD stands as a symbol of hope and promise for the nation, Ethiopians remain steadfast in their commitment to utilize their water resources including the Abbay River to benefit the people of Ethiopia and ensure regional integration.



## Published Weekly in Collaboration with Haramaya University

# HU welcomes eight round postgraduate residence program

BY DIRRIBA TESHOME

Haramaya University (HU) College of Health and Medical Sciences post graduate admission program accepted 58 students who passed the national post-graduate entrance exam and assigned to the university by the Ministry of Health.

Chief Clinical Director of Haramaya University Hiwot Fana Comprehensive Specialized Teaching Hospital, Dr. Abdi Amin, wished the students a happy stay at the university in his welcoming speech. "The hospital is serving the highest and broadest community in the eastern part of our country, and this will enable you to get better skills and knowledge."

Dr. Abdi Amin emphasized that HU will create favorable conditions for the students' studies adding: "You are expected to work and learn in harmony with the patients and the hospital's staff, using resources properly and organizing information."



New post graduate residency program students

Haramaya University is one of the oldest and earliest universities and has contributed many intellectuals to the country through its colleges and institutions.

Since the residency program started, 103 students have graduated and currently 138 are attending their studies.

The university, hosts students in eight

residency programs, explained and briefed them about the teaching, hospital and administrative services.

Students also said that they will have a good stay in the future considering the hospitality they have observed on their reception.

(Translated from HU FM Radio 91.5 Amharic version.)



Dr. Abdi Amin

## African countries to dominate the world's top 10 growing economies, ECA report

African countries are predicted to dominate the world's top 10 highest growing economies in 2024, according to a report on Recent Economic and Social Developments in Africa by the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA).

The most notable growth drivers in Africa in 2024 will be Niger, Senegal, Ivory Coast, DRC and Rwanda.

Adam Elhiraika, Director, Macroeconomics and Governance Division at ECA said Africa was the fastest growing region after East and South Asia in the developing world in 2023, and Africa will continue this trend in 2024 and 2025.

The report says that Niger and Senegal are expected to experience significant economic growth due to the increase in hydrocarbon production and exports.

Growth in Niger will be fueled by the revival of agricultural production - although it is vulnerable to unfavorable weather conditions - and a rise in crude oil production, which will have a beneficial impact on the transportation sector. However, recent military coups in, together with sanctions from regional blocs, have disrupted economic activity and incurred significant social costs.

The growth in Senegal will be driven by rising private and infrastructure projects, however, residents in up to 15 African nations are participating in elections this year, including the recently concluded

presidential elections in Senegal, which could impact the short-term growth and development.

"Ivory Coast, DRC and Rwanda - The robust expansion in these nations is attributed to an increase in infrastructure investment, continuous development in tourism, good performance of the mining industry, and advantages of economic diversification," said Mr. Elhiraika.

Growth in the DRC will be fuelled by the extractive sector due to the opening of new oilfields, as well as by agriculture, services, and mining, in accordance with the national strategy to boost social and investment expenditures.

Rwanda's growth will be fuelled by private consumption and investment, while Ivory Coast's growth is driven by increased investment stemming from pro-competitive market reforms and business environment improvements in the National Development Plan, alongside private consumption influenced by decreasing inflation.

The report shows that the continent is expected to grow from 2.8% in 2023 to 3.5% in 2024 and reaching 4.1% in 2025, mainly underpinned by net exports, private consumption and gross fixed investment.

Africa's economic growth remains unstable and lower than potential, and the rate required for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Agenda 2063 target, necessitating major fiscal and

monetary policy shifts as well as increased efforts to address internal and external balances, inflation and debt issues.

In 2023, the report says, the global economy showed resilience with declining energy and food prices, increased consumption in China, and improved US economic growth. Still, the outlook remains uncertain, with high debt, rising borrowing costs, weak global trade, and mounting geopolitical risks, constraining progress towards the SDGs and Agenda 2063 targets.

"The region faces threats of tighter monetary and fiscal conditions, and notable debt sustainability risks," noted Mr. Elhiraika adding that the ongoing climate catastrophes and extreme weather occurrences will continue to negatively impact agriculture and tourism, while geopolitical instability will continue to affect certain subregions in Africa.

Trade in Africa continues to face headwinds reflected in net capital outflows and subdued export revenues, with intra-African trade remaining relatively low. Africa's total exports are largely concentrated in extractive commodities, which has kept Africa trapped at low points along critical value chains.

Social development trends in Africa are concerning, with rising poverty, inequality, and unemployment exacerbating the continent's challenges to achieve the SDGs.

The ECA report notes that the capacity of African countries to effectively tackle

poverty and inequality is severely constrained by the low poverty-reducing effect of economic growth.

The key recommendations in the report include:

To revitalize trade in Africa, it is necessary to reduce trade costs in Africa. The implementation of the AfCFTA is vital to boost trade, eliminate barriers, and promote other trade liberating strategies.

To achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), it is necessary to mobilize more domestic resources and introduce innovative finance mechanisms through capacity building, institutional strengthening, and promotion of (tax) reforms; use digital technology; introduce environmental taxation; implement innovative finance mechanisms, such as debt swaps.

With the increasing number of countries in or at risk of debt distress, sustainable debt relief and restructuring measures are required.

Countries should implement structural reforms to help to revive growth and bolster resilience and to enhance the effectiveness of fiscal and monetary policies to contain inflation.

African countries should also capitalize on the current global shifts, including the transition towards renewable energy and the revitalized significance of critical minerals.

Source: UNECA