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Bishoftu Automotive inaugurates Safari Car manufacturing

BY YESUF ENDRIS

BISHOFTU - Bishoftu Automotive Manufacturing Industry announced the commencement of a pilot project for manufacturing safari cars.

Initiated by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) with the aim of supplying locally-made touring vehicles, the project is currently well underway.

During a visit to the pilot project at Bishoftu Automotive Manufacturing Industry (BAMI), Deputy Prime Minister (DPM) TemesgenTiruneh emphasized the increasing demand for safari cars as the number of tourism destinations grows.

He stated that manufacturing vehicles locally will enable the tourism sector to access facilities at fair price.

The lack of basic infrastructure had resulted in a lower-than-expected number of foreign tourists.

See Bishoftu Automotive .. page 3

Ethiopia's burgeoning ties with Rwanda

BY STAFF REPORTER

ADDIS ABABA – The recent visit of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) to Kigali would further enhance Ethiopia's bilateral ties with

Rwanda, Press Secretary of the Office of the Prime Minister, Billene Syoum said.

During his visit to Kigali, Prime Minister Abiy held bilateral discussion with President of Rwanda, Paul Kagame and attended the

30th Commemoration of the Genocide against Tutsi (Kwibuka30), the Press Secretary stated in a media briefing. The discussion held between the two leaders aimed at

See Ethiopia's burgeoning .. page 3



Gov't paves fertile ground for startup, innovative businesses

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

ADDIS ABABA - The government has taken bold steps to enable the startup ecosystem to create fertile ground for the

See Gov't paves .. page 3

Ethiopia aims for joining WTO soon

• Nation to host WTO accession meeting

BY ASHENAFI ANIMUT

ADDIS ABABA – Ethiopia has aspired to join World Trade Organization(WTO) utilizing membership negotiation that will be held here, Ministry of Trade and Regional Integration (MoTRI) said.

The country is going to host the 5th round WTO membership accession meeting that will take place in Addis Ababa this May.

Speaking to local media, MoTRI Minister Gebremeskel Chala said that the nation is currently preparing and incorporating fundamental documents among other undertakings to be a member of the organization that has long been interrupted for the last twenty years due to various

See Ethiopia aims .. page 3



Gebremeskel Chala

News

Ethiopia stepping up efforts towards undocumented migrants' repatriation

BY ESSEYE MENGISTE

ADDIS ABABA - Efforts are being exerted to repatriate undocumented Ethiopian migrants from Saudi Arabia, so announced Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia (MoFA).

A delegation led by MoFA State Minister, Ambassador Birtukan Ayano discussed many issues revolve around on the undocumented fellow citizens in Saudi Arabia with Saudi delegation led by Saudi Arabia's Foreign Affairs Deputy Minister Ali Al-Yousef in Riyadh.

At the event, Amb. Birtukan stated that a number of activities are carried out to return undocumented Ethiopian migrants to homeland from Saudi Arabia.

Ambassador Birtukan also discussed bilateral relations and a range of issues with Saudi Arabia's Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs.

The state minister moreover pointed out that the two countries are working hard on



strengthening their ties in all aspects.

The Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Saudi Arabia said on his part that the two sides had fruitful discussions paying heed to the issue.

"We will make sure that the undocumented immigrants to return home safely. The process of returning the migrants from Saudi will start soon," Amb. Birtukan said.

On the occasion, Ali Al Youssef mentioned

that his government would encourage those Ethiopians who come to work in Saudi legally and vowed to enhance the trade and investment relations between the two countries to a new high.



Japan extends mental health, psychosocial supports for teachers, students

BY ESSEYE MENGISTE

ADDIS ABABA - Japan has partnered with UNESCO IICBA project to support a project aimed at enhancing mental health and psychosocial support for teachers and students in conflict-affected states of Ethiopia.

According to the statement sent to The Ethiopian Herald by the Embassy of Japan in Ethiopia, the government of Japan has allocated 854,543 USD to the project. It aims to help teachers and students in the conflict affected areas of northern Ethiopia recover from the destruction of school infrastructure and the impact on their mental and social well-being.

The project aligns with Japan's

Human Security Approach, promoting comprehensive, context-specific responses and investing in people.

Japan's IDA Toshio and UNESCO Director Quentin Wodon launched a project focusing on mental health and psychosocial support for teachers and students in conflict-affected Ethiopia.

It was learnt that conflict and displacement severely impact school children, affecting education, mental and social well-being, and vulnerable groups like women, children, disabled, and elderly. Closing schools exposes children to sexual violence and military recruitment.

The Embassy Mission Deputy Chief IDA Toshio stated that: "Japan has been promoting the Human Security Approach by

integrating people-centered, comprehensive, context-specific, and "leave no one behind" responses." adding that "Japan's emphasis on investing in people is illustrated with this project with UNESCO-IICBA and the Ministry of Education of Ethiopia."

UNESCO International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa (IICBA) Director Quentin Wodon(PhD) stressed that "IICBA has been engaging in capacity building on mental health and psycho-social support for educators for several years. As an institute whose mission is 'Empowering teachers for all learners to thrive', we deeply believe in the importance of ensuring and restoring the well-being of teachers and learners affected by conflict, and of rehabilitating schools as spaces for healing, learning, and personal development."

Ethiopian marks 78th anniversary with special flight to Cairo

ADDIS ABABA (ENA) - Ethiopian Airlines Group, Africa's largest airline group, has marked its 78th anniversary, highlighting a legacy of resilience and innovation since 1946.

In connection with its 78th anniversary, the Ethiopian Airlines has made a special flight to Cairo, Egypt, according to the press release from the airlines.

Serving passengers on this special flight to Cairo is not just a tribute to our first international service but a reaffirmation of our commitment to the ethos of servant leadership, the release said.

Group Chief Executive Officer Mesfin Tassew and Chief Commercial Officer Lemma Yadecha accompanied the crew on a flight to Cairo, marking the airline's inaugural international service.

Their involvement extended beyond in-flight duties, as they also provided assistance to passengers during check-in and boarding processes, ensuring a seamless travel experience.

Regarding the occasion, Group CEO Mesfin said this event symbolizes our unwavering commitment to our passengers and our belief that true leadership lies in serving others first.

"From our humble beginning back in 1946, we've come to be the aviation giant in Africa that we are now, pioneering African

See Ethiopian marks .. page 3

News

Ethiopian marks 78th anniversary...

aviation with many first aviation innovation introductions to Africa along the way. As we are maturing beautifully, our commitment only gets stronger," he said.

In line with values of Ethiopian Airlines community engagement, passengers received Seasons Greeting Packages and Happy Fasting Messages, reflecting the airline's respect for diverse traditions, it was learned.

The packages included a postcard commemorating the anniversary, serving as a tangible reminder of the airline's enduring legacy.

On his part, Ethiopian Airlines Chief Commercial Officer (CCO) Lemma Yadecha said: "Our mission extends beyond transportation. We strive to foster a sense of unity and belongingness among our passengers, regardless of their background or belief."

The officer added the anniversary is a celebration of unity and diversity.

By stepping into the roles of our dedicated ground and flight crew, we honor every individual who has been part of our story. Our service today is a promise of continued



service excellence for all our passengers.

In a remarkable display of commitment, all executives at Ethiopian Airlines, have taken a hands-on approach to service, personally attending to the needs of our valued customers, he added.

This initiative underscores the airline's ethos of servant leadership and its dedication to providing an exceptional travel experience.

Celebrating its 78th anniversary, Ethiopian Airlines, a pioneer in aviation, continues to set industry standards with its commitment to innovation, safety, and customer satisfaction.

Upholding its mission to bridge Africa with the world, Ethiopian Airlines remains dedicated to enhancing passenger experience, as evidenced by its consideration to offer complimentary Wi-Fi to Cairo-bound travelers.

Ethiopia's...

strengthening the ties between Ethiopia and Rwanda.

According to Billene, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed has visited Rwandan Institute for Conservation Agriculture which is providing our students engaged in agricultural works with practical skills.

The institute provides practical training for students engaged in agricultural production, and it is a good experience to learn from, Billene noted.

The activities in the institution are akin to Ethiopia's priority for the agricultural development, and undertakings similar to the 'Bounty of the Basket' initiative which is being implemented under the leadership of Prime Minister Abiy are afoot there, she explained.

During the last African Union Summit, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and President Paul Kagame discussed a range of issues of common interest, and this is a continuation of the previous one, Billene pointed out.

In their bilateral discussions, they deliberated on a variety of issues and stressed the need for the two countries to expand their cooperation in the agricultural sector.

Members of the delegation led by the Prime Minister have also engaged in events of national importance in their respective fields, Billene sated.

The Rwandan government has allotted to Ethiopia more than 7,700 sq m of land in Kigali City where Foreign Minister Taye Atske Selassie laid the foundation stone for the construction of Ethiopian Embassy.

Billene expressed confidence that this will bring the strategic partnership agreement between the two nations to the next level.

Moreover, the Press Secretary disclosed that Mayor of Addis Ababa, Adanech Abibie signed MoU with her Kigali counterpart to collaborate on various areas.

It is to be recalled that during the course of the visit Rwandan President Paul Kagame extended his appreciation to the premier for serving as a young peacekeeper in the aftermath of the Rwandan genocide.

In 1995, PM Abiy served as a United Nations (UN) peacekeeper in Rwanda following the Rwandan genocide.

Bishoftu...

Drawing from Kenya's experience in manufacturing and assembling safari cars, the Deputy Prime Minister highlighted the "ongoing modifications of conventional vehicles as an alternative approach".

In addition to BAMI, several other manufacturing enterprises are participating in the pilot project as designs receiving the highest ranking will proceed to mass production.

Furthermore, the government is actively subsidizing local manufactured vehicles with the form of tax relief, prioritizing local products as a strategic approach.

Public institutions are encouraged to procure locally-made facilities, while society is urged to support same product manufacturers through their purchasing decisions.

The DPM also visited defense facilities including heavy guns carrier vehicles workshop in Bishoftu where he pledged his government's support to BAMI and the military workshop to overcome foreign exchange shortage.

Ethiopia aims for joining...

reasons.

The Minister, who is also Chief negotiator of WTO, further stated that the Ethiopian delegation paid a visit and held a fruitful discussion with the Organization's Director-General in Geneva, Switzerland in July, 2023.

The delegation had reached agreement to finalize the WTO membership negotiation process and join the organization within three years, he recalled.

Citing the country's readiness to address the inquiries in a way facilitated by organization in the near future, Gebremeskel said that Ethiopia is addressing 180 queries and 9 documents from member countries through a dedicated WTO platform.

Accordingly, the Ministry is finalizing

essential documents covering goods, services, import licensing, and many more aspects, he noted.

He said: "Ethiopia has made the necessary preparations to navigate these negotiations in a way aligning with its economic development aspirations and commercial competitiveness."

Since the country is more known for agricultural productivity, it was indicated that joining WTO would be a significant milestone to promote its export schemes and economic endeavors.

Moreover, the Minister remarked that its unwavering effort to be a member of the organization is a profound to become vibrant global trade ally.

It is to be recalled that Ethiopia has formally applied for WTO accession in 2003.

Gov't paves fertile ground for startup, ...

youth to foster innovative and problem-solving businesses and nurture their skills, the Industry Minister said.

Industry Minister Melaku Alebel told journalists that the reform government has been creating enabling conditions and implementing viable policies that have paved the ground for startups and increased the number of participants.

The government's policy is supporting the youth who are coming up with innovative ideas to play their due role to the development of their country and help them to translate their ideas into reality. Due to numerous initiatives, it is able to overcome pressing

hurdles and avail abundant opportunities to the young generation, Melaku added.

"The main reason we want to expand startups in the country is to use technology potential and new idea creators to begin innovative businesses. We prioritize working on five economic sectors, namely agriculture, mining, tourism and manufacturing, and IT."

The minister further highlighted that Ethiopia's startup ecosystem helps and encourages inventing of new ideas as the same time solves pressing problems in a sustainable manner. Moreover, the manufacturers, farmers, and others who are

doing their jobs using such technology will get additional benefits, increase product and productivity, and contribute their share to national development.

Likewise, due to startups, Ethiopia will get the opportunity to produce more products, boost productivity, create more jobs, improve foreign currency earnings, and attract new domestic and foreign investments and business.

According to him, expanding Ethiopian startup helps and facilitates the Homegrown Economy Reform and achieves what the nation planned to work. "When youth entrepreneurship is being fostered,

innovators officially will get trade licenses and work permits without an address limit, get special windows that serve only them and be able to get special funds without collateral."

Startups have strategic importance in the economy, particularly in the technology sector. ICT is among the top priorities of the economic sector, and these startups will catalyze progress in other sectors. It is crucial to set up an enabling environment for youth innovators, including enabling them to access finance and international networks and help them to contribute to Ethiopia's economic progress, the minister emphasized.

Opinion

Showcasing Ethiopia's resilient spirit of unity and harmony during *Eid al-Fitr*

BY ADDISALEM MULAT

It is certain that as a land of a multi-cultural society, Ethiopia entertains quite a lot of religious and cultural practices in the length and breadth of the country without a hitch. Irrespective of their religion, there is always a strong bond and attachment among the various nations, nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia.

Whenever there is Christian holydays, it is common to celebrate with Muslim neighbors. Likewise, whenever there is Islamic holidays or religious festivals, Christian neighbors mark the day with their Muslim friends under the same roof with love, harmony and peace.

This reality on the ground has been winning the hearts and minds of the wider international community again and again. As nothing makes the entire Muslim community happier than sharing, they give priority to the disadvantaged and shower them with a wide spectrum of benevolences with dignity and respect.

No matter what happens, they do not distance themselves from stretching their arms to the poor. Apart from that they eat their meals together with joy and generous hearts and treat everyone equally.

Ethiopians have an age old culture of living together in love and tolerance at home and abroad. This is witnessed more than a few times when invaders make an effort to impend the peace and stability of the nation. No matter what their difference is each and every one next to no time stand against external forces.

Whenever internal and external actors make an effort to pour cold water on the peace and tranquility of the country making use of a number of evil deeds or strategies, Ethiopians almost immediately take action in unison irrespective of their religion. As they bond of Muslims and Christians are very unbreakable, they cannot make their dream become a reality.

As learnt from Ethiopian Islamic Affairs Supreme Council, Ramadan is one of the 12 months of the Islamic calendar and the month in which fasting is made obligatory by the Holy Quran. Fasting the Ramadan season is the most important of the basic instructions of Islam, and whoever is able to do so. A healthy person has to fast. Fasting is compulsory for adults. It takes place from dawn to sunset. In general, fasting is obligatory because it is the basis of the faith.

In the present climate a wide spectrum of Street Iftar has been taking place in various parts of the country by the Muslim community.

In a previous interview with *The Ethiopian Herald*, Ismael Hussein, who participated in the fourth Grand Street Iftar at Meskel Square, expressed the importance of showcasing Ethiopia's rich Islamic history and its tradition of unity and harmony among various religious groups. He highlighted Ethiopia's historical significance as the first country to welcome Islam during times of persecution, providing refuge to its followers.



Celebrating *Eid al-Fitr* colorfully and enjoying various kinds of delicious food

Hussein emphasized the role of the Street Iftar in demonstrating the humility and faith of Ethiopian believers during the holy months of Lent and Ramadan, observed by Christians and Muslims.

He underscored the blessings and unity experienced by celebrating the Iftar alongside fellow Muslim brothers and sisters, which serves as an opportunity to share Ethiopian values with the world.

As a Muslim, he highlighted Ethiopia's unique place in Islam, noting the presence of tombs of thirteen senior messengers of Islam in the country. Throughout history, Ethiopia has been a sanctuary for those persecuted due to their religious beliefs, earning a reputation as a beacon of tolerance due to its significant position in the teachings of both Christianity and Islam.

According to Ethiopian Islamic Affairs Supreme Council, aside from showcasing Islamic history, the Grand Street Iftar promotes communal harmony and displays the hallmark of Ethiopia's unity to the world.

The Council's President Sheikh Haji Ibrahim Tufa recently said that the Iftar gathering was celebrated with impactful programs while remembering brothers and sisters who are in mysterious circumstances because of displacement.

"I would like to urge you all to help those who are out of their homes. We consider the people are need of peace. So, all should take its responsibility to restore needed peace," he said during the event.

Addis Ababa Islamic Affairs Council President, Sheikh Sultan Aman Eba on his

part said that the Grand Iftar has showcased how Ethiopian Muslims are thriving to preserve peace and stability. He further urged all Muslim residents of the city to support projects, including the construction of modern mosques and governmental infrastructural development projects which are being carried out in various areas of the city.

Speaking to Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation (EBC), Ustaz Abubeker Ahmed also said that the Street Iftar preaches not only religious beliefs but also brings people from all walks of life together. The Street Iftar is almost new to Ethiopia, but progressing through time, he commented.

"We gathered to praise unity and solidarity. The ultimate goal [of Ramadan] is uniting peoples who were disintegrated. As Ethiopians, it would help us promote our unity to the globe; it is already becoming World's largest Iftar gathering," he suggested.

As a country, Ethiopia has been challenged with several societal problems. This event and the month of Ramadan teach to write-off problematic habits and to build new phases benefiting all people, he noted.

Ethiopia is the country with precious Islamic history. It was the first country to welcome Islam during that hard time. So, this Iftar program will promote the forgotten history, he added.

In connection with the Eid al-Fitr, the end of the fasting month of Ramadan, Haji Ibrahim gave briefings to the media, according to information obtained from a local media.

Haji Ibrahim said that Muslims should celebrate the Eid al-Fitr by giving alms to the

poor and needy people. Eid al-Fitr must also be celebrated in peace, unity and brotherhood, Haji Ibrahim added.

He also pointed out that the faithful should give priority to maintain peace and foster brotherhood among the people during the holiday. In this regard, he urged the faithful to play their part in maintaining the peace and stability of the country.

By the same token, the Ethiopian Islamic Affairs Supreme Council hosted lately a grand street Iftar that brought together thousands of Ethiopian Muslims for an evening Iftar in Addis Ababa, according to Ethiopian News Agency.

During the occasion, Islamic Affairs Supreme Council Head, Muslims must console the poor and needy, show solidarity and unity during this month of Ramadan.

The Muslim community should also consolidate unity, solidarity, and maintain peace in the community, he added. The Grand Ethiopian Street Iftar coordinator, Ustaz Abubeker Ahmed noted on his part that Ramadan is a month of togetherness. The Iftar banquet was attended by diplomats, members of Islamic communities, and invited guests.

Following the celebration of Ramadan, countless people from every part of the world have been coming to Ethiopia with the purpose of partaking in various holidays. Coinciding with the upcoming major holidays and break time, Ethiopia is expected to enjoy numerous arrivals of second generation homecoming initiative, Tourism Minister, Ambassador Nasisie Chali said.

"As March break and grand holidays such as Ramadan and Easter are approaching, the number of influxes is increasing. Also, the guests have attended the grand Iftar programs in various areas of the country," she underscored.

While commencing the second round homecoming program, The Minister said that in connection with Adwa victory commemoration and other related side events, the Diaspora community has been actively taking part in a wide range of involvements thereby registering remarkable achievements.

Aligning with the theme of the second round, "Connect to your historical roots," which will be held from the end of February 2024 to beginning of May 2024, she stated that chains of side events, panel discussions among many others are planned to be carried out with a view of reconnecting homecomers with their history to realize the nation's development.

Keeping up the peaceful and harmonious trend that has taken place during the great Street Iftar, the Eid al-Fitr celebration ought to take place in a spirit of promoting brotherhood among the Muslim community and with the other Ethiopian communities showcasing Ethiopia's resilient spirit of unity and harmony.

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

Editorial

Towards cementing Ethio-Rwanda bilateral relations

It is well recognized that nations with bilateral, trilateral or multilateral ties can open a number of avenues for exchanging social, economic, political and diplomatic concerns mainly to come up with gains benefiting both sides. Such lucrative movements can be fostered by agents such as ambassadors, counselors, liaison officers and other possible means so as to facilitate cooperation leading towards common growth at the end of the day.

What Ethiopia and Rwanda are doing right now is a case in point in this regard, and the two countries are working hard to well foster good, doable and supportive relations that will help them enjoy operating sleek ties for common good.

Unforgettably, the former had sent peacekeeping forces to the latter. This is highly regarded as one of the ever-remembered elements that have resolutely tied the two friendly countries. The situation has thus been an indication of the growing relationship between the two sovereign nations. True, the diplomatic tie Ethiopia and Rwanda have been pursuing is significantly useful in further strengthening the sisterhood of Addis Ababa and Kigali apart from boosting the government-to-government amalgamation.

To further heighten such an audacious alliance, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed recently arrived in Kigali, Rwanda for an official working visit, and Rwandan President Paul Kagame extended his appreciation to him for the service his country had rendered in the aftermath of the Rwandan genocide.

The two leaders discussed bilateral and regional issues and on how to further strengthen the cooperation between the two countries.

The spectacular development of relations between the two nations regarding a multitude of areas would undoubtedly take them towards transformational tracks. Yes, the establishment of diplomatic relations between Ethiopia and Rwanda has been a matter of mutual consent.

The areas of cooperation between the two countries would be instrumental in rousing regional cooperation, especially in areas of boosting economic growth peace and security, cooperation in the management, development and utilization of shared natural resources, protection of the impacts of climate change and other emerging regional issues of common interest. As to the Premier, Ethiopia and Rwanda enjoy excellent bilateral relations and also at a multilateral level including at the African Union and the UN. Doing all these important tasks, Ethiopia and Rwanda are expected to emerge with a renewed commitment to work together, building on the existing strong ties.

Rwanda has indeed upgraded its bilateral ties with Ethiopia in a show of deeper support for a long-time strategic partner while extending a diplomatic push in a strategic part of Africa. They are thus expected to enjoy running all-weather strategic partnership. Besides, they need to take the establishment of their new elevated ties as a chance to advance common development and win-win cooperation in all circumstances and areas of collaboration. Resilient relations have contributed a lot to a more effective engagement between the two countries. Yes, Ethiopia and Rwanda have been working towards maintaining people-to-people connections and creating opportunities for positive bilateral engagement between government officials and other citizenry connections. Such a bold move has kept doors open for firm cooperation and reliable mutual bond, indeed!

When nations do have direct experience of their counterpart, they can create trust in the latter and establish connection and solid ties, which is resilient to the ups and downs of the socio-economic or economic-political relationships. Certainly, building mutual trust and collaboration through political, economic and social spheres can help cultivate popular support for the wider relationship in both parties. Besides, it is much more likely that cooperative relations between countries will help them enjoy having streamlined people-to-people and government-to-government ties.

Opinion

Addis Corridor development project to give metropolis new, beautiful face

BY GIRMACHEW GASHAW

Ababa Ababa, the capital of Ethiopia, is now serving as the seat of the Africa Union, the headquarters of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, and the head quarter of international organizations and diplomatic communities. Although it is a city that holds this role, Addis Ababa has not been modernized and is not able to be equivalent to its sister cities due to various reasons.

In order to modernize the city and make it convenient for its residents, the city administration is designing and working on a corridor development project. The provision of adequate money and land compensation is being prepared and paid for those who are locally displaced for city reconstruction and corridor development activities. Now, the task is ongoing by the day and night effort of high caliber professionals.

The project is part and parcel of making Addis Ababa a beautiful flower, like its name suggests. With such a vision, the corridor and reconstruction development works have been carried out as per the pledge of the incumbent government to Addis residents during its election campaign. The project includes massive and human-oriented development projects. Among the development works that have been done so far, for instance, are the construction of the municipal office, Masqal Square, Friendship and Unity Park, the Science Museum, the Abrihot Library, Pushkin Square, Gotera Akaki Bole Road, and so on.

Apart from changing the shabby looks of the city, the project is contributing to the social and economic development of residents. The corridor development in general is making Addis Ababa a capital convenient for its residents, and a destination for tourists upon completion of the next phase of its development.

In the first round, a 40-kilometer corridor is being undertaken at the following lines: The first line starts from Adwa Victory Memorial Square and crosses via Arat Kilo-Kebena-Megenagna. The second passes through Arat Kilo-Bole Airport-Bole Bridge-Megenagna. The third line starts from the New Africa Convention Center and connects with the CMC. The fourth line connects Mexico-Africa Union-Sarbet-Wolo Sefer. It is often said that the development of the corridor is connecting the dots of renovating areas apart from creating comfortable areas for residents who lived in rubbish parts of the city and were prone to diseases.

Although there is a limitation in informing society about the importance

of the development in a proper way, the project has given the people who were displaced from their villages to create a better living environment.

According to various reports; there is no change in the area designation of the capital except to create a convenient common use for all the communities in the development of the corridor. In the corridor development work, heritage and infrastructure will be preserved and restored. This makes it competitive with international cities. It is said that heritage sites such as Cinema Ethiopia, Hager Fiker, Showa Hotel, City Convention, Habte Giorgis Dingde's house, and the old town hall and post office will continue to be renovated.

This has thwarted the false narrative by some "activists" from time to time. There is a corridor development monitoring task force in sub-cities where there are development initiatives, and there is an office that responds to people's grievances at all five corridor development initiatives at the city administration level.

In order to maintain the social ties of the residents, there is a possibility of providing subsidized communal housing, which is a convenient opportunity to continue their togetherness. This will allow them to continue social interaction in the community and give them a sense of ownership on the overall development.

In view of the size of the corridor development, it is working hard to complete the road and green development work in Piazza, Arat Kilo, and Bole lines by the end of May. According to the data of the Addis Ababa City Administration Fire and Emergency Risk Management Commission; the corridor development of the capital is beyond the development of the city and can save the lives of citizens who are vulnerable to fire and emergencies. The ongoing road corridor development has made a significant contribution to preventing the risks associated with housing density, narrowness of roads, overlapping of power lines, and blockage of drainage pipes.

The development of the corridor will allow houses to be built according to the plan, roads to be widened, modern electricity lines to be laid, and drainage pipes to be built with quality. It is also believed to be a permanent solution that saved many areas from fires, floods, traffic jams, and other disasters.

The corridor development project will change the former image of Addis Ababa into a great and globally competitive city, apart from making it comfortable for its residents. For the success of the project, every organization should discharge its responsibility.

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Business & Economy

Attaching due emphasis to coffee export

BY MENGESHA AMARE

Ethiopia, which is regarded as the origin of Arabica coffee, is one of Africa's largest producers and exporters of this commodity. Coffee production is dubbed as the backbone of the country's agriculture-led economy. Coffee is growing naturally in Ethiopia and most of the coffee is under shade without the use of agricultural chemicals. Besides, the country is endowed with the major specialty coffee types like Yigachefie, Sidama, Harrar, Limu, Nekemt, among others, as they are known for their quality and mesmerizing flavor.

Dry processed bean is the most commonly used coffee preparation methods in Ethiopia but, wet-processed beans are getting more popular since recently. There are numerous varieties of coffee bean with their own distinct flavor and sizes.

The Ethiopian Coffee and Tea Authority have recently proclaimed that the country has earned over 716 million USD from coffee exports over the past eight month of the current fiscal year.

Authority Public Relations and Communication Director, Sahlemariam Gebremedhin told the media that the country has amassed about 716.35 million USD from 150,430.55 tons of coffee export to the international market in the stated same period.

Reminding the country's plan to obtain 1 billion USD exporting 211,370 tons of coffee to the international market in the same stated period of the fiscal year, the Public Relations and Communication Director said adding that the performance reaches 67% the target.

Compared to the last same budget year, he said, this year's export volume exceeds 7,228.78 ton. Consequently, there is a slight decrease due to the decreasing volume of the global coffee market.

He said Ethiopia is known as the birth place of Coffee Arabica. Coffee has been and remains the leading cash crop and export commodity of the country. Coffee export has heavily contributed to both domestic and foreign earnings in the country.

He said, "The country secured about 88.64 million USD from 19,245.90 tons of coffee a month before. Thus, it shows a slight difference compared to the same period. Saudi Arabia, South Korea, America, Germany, Japan, Belgium, China, Sudan, UAE, Italy are the main Ethiopian coffee destination countries. Most importantly, the products exported to major Ethiopian coffee destination countries accounted for 80% of the total coffee trade and 79% of the total revenue."

As to him, the country earned 152.36 million USD exporting 37,614.41 tons of coffee to Saudi Arabia, which is the leading buyer of Ethiopian coffee.



Furthermore, the Authority has secured 72.84 million USD by exporting about 12, 583.89 tons of coffee to South Korea. Besides, it has managed to hit 60.27 million USD exporting 9,438.15 tons of coffee to America.

The director also indicated that the Authority is currently carrying out multifaceted undertakings to enhance the quality and productivity with a view of generating more revenue.

Unequivocally, the country produces high-quality coffee beans. The country has provided users with world-class quality and coming up with the best cups of coffee at large. It is also well explained that Ethiopia exported 117,955 tons of coffee to the international market during the first half of the current Ethiopian 2023/24 fiscal year.

As to the Ethiopian Coffee and Tea Authority, Saudi Arabia, South Korea, the United States, Germany, Japan and China were the major destinations of Ethiopia's coffee exports during the stated period.

Despite efforts to augment the coffee export volume and earnings, the authority said uncertainties in the global coffee market coupled with ongoing conflicts in coffee-importing countries have posed challenges.

Widely recognized for its rich coffee quality and flavor, Ethiopia, these days, is focusing on the boosting coffee production and productivity. Yes, as relocation of coffee farms/areas will be a key component in building resilience for the Ethiopian coffee economy, the country has to follow a very strategic and lucrative means.

Since climate change negatively affects coffee farmers as they experience late harvests due to lack of rainfall and lack of knowledge and technology to implement climate smart agriculture practices, Ethiopia is left with a long journey in this regard.

As learnt from sources, some coffee farmers in the eastern and southwestern parts of the country switched to farming khat, a drought tolerant plant used as

a stimulant drug. Khat has short term economic advantages and a better price but long term negative environmental and health consequences.

Obviously, Ethiopia remains prized on the international specialty coffee market for its high quality and unique characteristics. Demand for Ethiopian specialty coffee has also increased and continues to grow. Its higher quality status is achieved by implementing the best agricultural practices in farming, harvesting, and processing methods, combined with elevated levels of quality control. In an ideal model, the extra income generated by specialty coffee is distributed throughout the supply chain, including the coffee farmers.

The volatility of international markets, along with domestic challenges, contributed to the shortfall. High coffee prices in Ethiopia's domestic market and exchange rate rules that limited exporters to utilizing only 20 percent of the foreign currency they secured discouraged exports.

In addition to volatility in the global market, as per source, 'illegal trading' as another hurdle affecting Ethiopia's coffee export targets. Trading premium-quality coffee slated for export locally is considered illegal in Ethiopia.

Illegal trade, contract defaults and forgery of export coffee beans have been a persistent problem, resulting in substantial financial losses given that coffee represents a significant portion of Ethiopia's economy. Overcoming such challenges would help Ethiopia bring about economic growth and sustainable development. The impact of Coffee exports on economic growth in Ethiopia is vividly witnessed, indeed!

Growth is among top global agenda nowadays and countries such as Ethiopia are struggling battles to hasten their economic growth. Increasing efficiency of coffee sector, value addition to coffee beans before exporting would enable country to generate weighty revenue to finance its economic growth, the Director stated.

Economic development is one of the principal goals of every economy in the world, and growth is indispensable for countries to achieve desired level of economic development. In a similar way, growth is determined by many factors, yet the question is how countries can realize their growth. Agriculture is the dominant sector in Ethiopian economy.

Hence, it serves as the back bone of country's economy, which again determines the success of all other sectors. It contributes for 34% of GDP, 85% of foreign exchange earnings, employs 80% of labor force. A unique feature of Ethiopian agriculture is the role of smallholder farms in the total output.

As economy is largely agrarian and export is largely dependent on the sector, coffee is most important traded commodities in the world with development and poverty implications given high engagement in production by small-holders in Ethiopia.

Agricultural sector in Ethiopia is based on traditional methods with insufficient market information, unstable price, poor quality, lack of trust among trading partners and uncoordinated markets. The bulk of the country's export earnings come from the agricultural sector basically coffee. Furthermore, exported primary goods are less competitive related to imported capital goods making trade balance to deteriorate as compared to current exporter. Coffee in Ethiopia has been dynamic with credibly immense potential, of course.

To improve the competitiveness of the country in its coffee export according to the target markets preferences, the country needs to be in a position to help boost domestic coffee production via improving exporter's capacity for competition, consistency, communication, logistic and regulatory procedures. Strategies to improve the quantity and quality of export coffee in Ethiopia have to be scrupulously applied, and coffee has to be well nurtured.

Ethiopia provides the highest quality coffee since it is the birthplace of Arabica coffee. This coffee is Ethiopia's most important export item. In the country, smallholders produce 95% of the coffee, with little or no intensification of the production system. Coffee can be combined with spices, bananas, and other similar crops. As a result, coffee will not be the primary source of income for growers, and they will be able to maximize their earnings from the same land they used to cultivate.

The long run coffee export has positive and significant effect on economic growth in the country. Coffee trading has played a significant role in the aggregate changes in the economy of countries exporting coffee. Coffee exports have a positive and significant link to economic growth. Being aware of the importance of coffee export on economy, Ethiopia has focused on producing coffee and making it boost in terms of production and exports.

In the Sphere of Diplomacy

Excelling Ethio-Rwanda relations to maximize cooperation, benefits

BY EYUEL KIFLU

Kigali, the capital city of Rwanda, has gained global recognition for its outstanding cleanliness and urban development, leaving visitors in awe. This achievement becomes even more remarkable when considering the country's painful history, particularly the devastating genocide of 1994.

Ethiopia, having faced its own challenges and provided support during the genocide, can learn valuable lessons from Rwanda's journey of reconciliation and progress. The two African nations have been undergoing and achieving tangible economic development and national reconciliation for a better future. The two counterparts have a lot in common and have many to share.

Kigali, often hailed as Africa's cleanest city, boasts meticulous urban planning and a deep commitment to environmental sustainability. Its streets are immaculate, adorned with beautiful gardens and green spaces, while efficient wastage management systems ensure cleanliness throughout the city. By prioritizing cleanliness and embracing sustainable practices, Kigali has become an attractive destination for tourists and investors. Similarly, Ethiopia's ongoing Smart City project in Addis Ababa aims to uplift the city in order to live up to its name as the 'Capital of Africa'.

Acknowledging Rwanda's tumultuous past is crucial to fully appreciate the significance of its transformation. In 1994, the country was torn apart by a brutal genocide that claimed the lives of approximately 800,000 people within a mere 100 days. In the aftermath of this tragedy, Rwanda faced the monumental task of rebuilding and healing its fractured society.

During this harrowing time, Ethiopia extended its support and stood by Rwanda, joining forces with other nations to provide humanitarian aid and assistance under the United Nations' peacekeeping mission.

Ethiopia and Rwanda have maintained solid and longstanding bilateral cooperation since establishing their diplomatic relations in the late 1970s. Ethiopia's contribution to peacekeeping efforts and its commitment to supporting Rwanda during its darkest hours demonstrated the importance of regional solidarity and international cooperation in times of crisis.

During the 25th Genocide Commemoration, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed expressed his personal connection to the tragic events, having visited Rwanda as part of an Ethiopian peacekeeping delegation



in 1995. His words reaffirmed Ethiopia's unwavering support during Rwanda's difficult times. Furthermore, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and First Lady Zinash Tayachew have recently arrived in Kigali, Rwanda on an official visit and participated in the Kwibuka30, the 30th commemoration of genocide against the Tutsi, expressing Ethiopia's solidarity with the Rwandan people.

By the same token, Paul Kagame, President of Rwanda, remembered and appreciated the commitment from Ethiopia and its Prime Minister during the devastating history of his country by extending his appreciation to Prime Minister Abiy for serving as a young peacekeeper in the aftermath of the Rwandan genocide. In fact, Ethiopia's Prime Minister Abiy served as a United Nations (UN) peacekeeper in Rwanda following the Rwandan genocide back in 1995.

Speaking at the commemoration organized to mark the 39th year anniversary of genocide, President Kagame has also recognized the leadership of different countries for supporting Rwanda's rebuilding at the time.

"I want to recognize a few while also asking for forgiveness not being able to mention or who deserves it. For example, Uganda, which carried the burden of Rwanda. The leadership and people of Ethiopia and Eritrea helped us in starting to rebuild at that time," he said. "Prime Minister Abiy, who is here even served as the young peacekeeper in the immediate

aftermath of the genocide," the President said.

The two countries share a longstanding relationship across various sectors, and Prime Minister Abiy's recent official visit to Rwanda further solidified their ties. The foundation stone was laid for the Ethiopian Embassy office in Kigali, on a 7,771 square meters land provided by the Rwandan government. Amb. Taye Atskeselassie, Minister of Foreign Affairs, emphasized that this land allocation would enhance the fruitful relationship between the two nations. In return, Ethiopia has also allocated an equal amount of land for the construction of the Rwandan embassy in Addis Ababa.

Since 2012, Ethiopia and Rwanda have signed 23 agreements and memorandums of understanding that highly reflect their commitment to bilateral cooperation. The construction of the embassy office plays a pivotal role in implementing these agreements, as highlighted by Ambassador Taye. In addition to that, during the recently concluded third meeting of the Ethio-Rwanda Joint Ministerial Commission in Addis Ababa, the countries agreed to collaborate on trade, risk reduction and management, sports, politics, and investment, further strengthening their cooperation.

Rwanda's journey towards healing and reconciliation remains ongoing, as highlighted by a recent UNDP report. The scars of the genocide may never fully heal, but the country's unwavering

commitment to building a more inclusive and harmonious society is evident. Rwanda has demonstrated to the world that forgiveness, compassion, and unity are possible, even in the face of unimaginable pain and trauma.

Speaking of the incredible Rwanda's Reconciliation achievement, "The latest Rwanda Reconciliation Barometer published by the government shows that the status of reconciliation in Rwanda moved from 82.3 % in 2010 to 92.5 % in 2015 and to 94.7 % in 2020. Another factor the reconciliation barometers presented as hindering reconciliation was the fact that some Rwandans still viewed themselves and others through ethnic lenses. Rwandans, according to the official report, feel attached to their national identity, which would make reconciliation highly possible, as it would mean that they have overcome tendencies to associate themselves and others with ethnic-specific identities," according to a report.

Based on the aforementioned statistics, Ethiopia can draw valuable lessons from Rwanda's remarkable journey. Following the genocide, Rwanda embarked on a path of healing and unity, prioritizing justice, forgiveness, and national dialogue. The establishment of the Gacaca Courts, a community-based justice system allowing perpetrators to confess their crimes, seeks forgiveness, and reintegrate into society, played a crucial role in fostering reconciliation and rebuilding trust among Rwandans. In light of Ethiopia's own internal challenges, fostering national reconciliation through open dialogue, truth-seeking, and a culture of forgiveness becomes paramount.

Ethiopia can also find inspiration in Rwanda's success in various areas. Investing in education, healthcare, and infrastructure will contribute to the overall well-being and development of the nation. Rwanda's commitment to cleanliness, reconciliation, and sustainable development offers a blueprint for progress that Ethiopia can emulate.

As Ethiopia reflects on its history and confronts its challenges, Rwanda's remarkable transformation serves as a source of inspiration. Ethiopia, with its rich history and resilient spirit, has the potential to achieve remarkable success by drawing on the lessons of Rwanda's journey. Just as Kigali shines as a beacon of cleanliness and reconciliation, Ethiopia can embark on its transformative path, driven by unity, forgiveness, and sustainable development. The country's ongoing efforts, such as the rapid development witnessed through collaboration with neighboring countries, exemplify its ambition to become a developed nation in Africa.

Law & Politics

Creating opportunities for refugees

BY DANIEL ALEMAYEHU

The right to move from place to place is one of the many human rights that a person enjoys. On many occasions, people exercise their right by moving from place to place. Such moves might have different reasons. Some are from personal interests like recreational purposes. On the other hand, some movements happen from various pushing factors which force people to flee from their home land and seek shelter or asylum in other places as refugees.

Natural disasters and conflicts between and within nations are some of the many factors that force people to leave their countries. In this regard, the refugee crisis has become the major headache for many nations. The crisis is also disturbing the social fabrics and global well-being of many places across the planet. It has also become one of the many causes for human rights violations and humanitarian assistance crisis as refugees have experienced the worst incident to own no right and not to be treated as a person and leave them between two fences.

In the world of globalization, anything that happens in any part of the world has a huge impact on other sides. The best examples could be the war between Russia and Ukraine. Though the war is between two nations, the conflict still poses a significant threat for many countries. Likewise, the refugee crisis is getting into its worst condition as millions have been fleeing from their countries for different reasons. Globally, media outlets and government officials have been expressing their concern towards the refugees and its consequences.

It is the fact that the refugee crisis has caused unmatched economic, political and societal burdens on nations especially for developing countries. According to reports, in the present climate, people are fleeing from their home due to numerous push and pull factors. Again, most of the refugees are taking the routes to neighboring countries. To this end, Ethiopia has been an attractive destination for many refugees from neighboring countries.

When many of the developed nations where refugees want to enter, have slammed their door to refugees especially from Africa, Ethiopia has become the best place to put their boots. With all its internal unrest and its internally displaced people (IDPs), Ethiopia has not hesitated to receive as many as one million refugees from its neighboring states such as Sudan, Eritrea, and Somalia. On top of that, while the nation is dealing with a number of internal issues, it still extends its culture of receiving guests who ask for shelter.

In the past few years, the refugee crisis amounts, and statistics indicate the same. According to the report from Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) over 3.5 million individuals are on the move, experiencing an annual growth of 7%. Parallel with the increment in refugees' number, Ethiopia



has also been increasing its activities in receiving and handling refugees from its neighboring nations no matter what happens internally.

The government of Ethiopia has been taking much appreciated actions in relation to handling refugees and trying to make them feel at home. Coupled with receiving close to a million refugees, Ethiopia is also introducing legal platforms coupled with other basic services provisions for refugees so that refugees start experiencing that they are living among their sisters and brothers not as refugees.

Accordingly, Ethiopia has crafted a new Refugees Proclamation in accordance with international agreements and the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia's Constitution. The new refugee proclamation states that the country is providing asylum and protection to refugees in accordance with the signed international treaties and conventions.

In addition to this, the country has recently become a pioneer to launch a system that awards a digital identification (ID) for refugees which is crucial to access to national services. The Government of Ethiopia, through its Refugees and Returnees Service (RRS) in partnership with National ID Program (NIDP) and UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency launched an initiative to include refugees and asylum seekers into the Ethiopian Digital ID system.

The ID system for refugee's which is currently in its pilot stage is being activated in Addis Ababa with the issuance of digital refugee ID cards that feature a unique identification number, using biometric technology, called "Fayda". The system will also help to prevent double registration and duplicate ID cards issuance to the refugees.

Such an act of refugee inclusion to the system was highly appreciated by stakeholders, and Ethiopia has proven itself to be the best refugee destination in the Horn. Yodahe Zemichael, Executive Director at the National ID Program to his part said, "In a world where identity is the

key to access, Fayda Digital ID for refugees is not just an ID; it is a gateway to dignity, enabling access to essential services, legal recognition, and opportunities to be integrated into host communities. Let's build systems that recognize everyone, ensuring that no one is left behind."

In similar vein, to make things even better for refugees in recent times, UNHCR Ethiopia and Gebeya Inc., a leading Pan-African tech leadership company that specializes in Saas-enabled custom Talent Cloud innovation, have officially launched a digital platform that will help refugees presenting their skills and talents, unlocking professional opportunities in the digital economy.

According to a press release from the UNHCR, the platform entitled 'BoundlessSkills.com' plans to connect skilled refugees and members of the communities with potential employers. In this regard, from the start of the platform back in November 2023, around three hundred refugees are included and presented themselves on the platform.

"We're thrilled with the tremendous potential this initiative has already demonstrated in just a few months," said Leul Girma, Gebeya's Chief Operating Officer. "Thanks to support from visionary partners, we're now mobilizing to match these skilled refugee professionals with rewarding career opportunities. And this is just the start. The digital economy offers a powerful pathway toward greater self-reliance for displaced populations. We're eager to replicate and expand models like Boundless Skills Talent Cloud to help refugees safely access decent work opportunities online," said Leul.

The partnership between Gebeya and UNHCR is made possible through the generous support of the Netherlands' Ministry of Foreign Affairs through the PROSPECTS Opportunity Fund. This partnership also aligns with the pledge by the Government of Ethiopia at the Global Refugee Forum 2023 to create economic opportunities for refugees and host communities, it was stated.

By the same token, Margaret Atieno, UNHCR's Deputy Representative in Ethiopia, stated, "Solutions that ensure forcibly displaced populations in Ethiopia, including refugees, are included in the country's economic sector remain critical. Despite their skills, professional experience and higher education degrees, displaced people struggle to access dignified work. Through this partnership, UNHCR and Gebeya are working to empower refugees to earn a living, to become self-reliant and contribute to the digital economy.

Skillsets available on the platform include both technical and non-technical skills, ranging from software development and data analysis to digital marketing and customer care services.

To strengthen the impact of the Boundless Skills platform, Gebeya has partnered with various organizations including the Refugee Investment Network (RIN), an organization dedicated to creating solutions to global forced migration, which has the ultimate goal of successfully matching refugees with decent work opportunities, and the Amahoro Coalition working towards providing solutions for refugees through decent work opportunities.

In particular, Amahoro will be supporting the scaling of the talent pool by onboarding a pipeline of more than 2,000 skilled and qualified refugees across Gebeya's Talent Cloud ecosystem. Amahoro will then work to connect these pre-vetted refugee talents with jobs available through their network of private sector partners.

Ethiopia currently hosts close to 1 million refugees and asylum seekers, being the third main refugee hosting country in Africa. Since meeting their goal to fully onboard 300 refugees by April 2024, the Boundless Skills Talent Cloud is now exploring possibilities to scale up to greater numbers across the continent in the near future. Businesses and organizations interested in accessing hiring opportunities and getting involved on the Boundless Skills Talent Cloud can visit BoundlessSkills.com to learn more.

Society

Genuine cooperation to utilize Nile water for socio-economic dev't

BY TEWODROS KASSA

In a world where resources are becoming increasingly scarce, cooperation is key to ensuring sustainable utilization of the blessings for the benefit of all. In the ever-changing landscape of global politics and economics, cooperation among nations is crucial for sustainable development and peace. One of the most pressing issues facing the world today is the utilization of water resources, particularly in regions where water scarcity is a major concern.

The Nile River, despite being one of the longest rivers in the world, has been a source of contention among the countries it flows through. However, there is a growing realization that genuine cooperation is essential to harnessing the full potential of Nile water for mutual socio-economic development. One of the key benefits of genuine cooperation in utilizing Nile water is the promotion of sustainable development. By working together, countries can ensure that water resources are managed in a way that benefits not just one nation, but all nations along the river. This can lead to increased electricity access, agricultural productivity, improved access to clean water, and enhanced economic opportunities for the region as a whole.

Recently, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) emphasized that the bottom line in the utilization of Nile waters is forging cooperation among 11 countries that enables them to use the common river fairly and equally.

Speaking to *The Ethiopian Herald*, African Affairs Director General with MoFA, Amb. Shawel stated that cooperation is the only way for the Nile riparian countries to capitalize the cross border river to change the livelihoods of their people.

Amb. Fiseha indicated that the agreement in the fair utilization of Nile waters has a paramount significance in transforming their relations to cooperation and partnership instead of hesitation and confrontation.

The Cooperative Framework of Agreement (CFA) signed in Entebbe a decade ago is a historic measure that irreversibly corrects the age-long unjust utilization of the Nile River. The agreement is expected to improve the livelihood of the inhabitants of the Nile riparian countries.

Abay Hydro Dam is not only vital to Ethiopia, but it would also bring a lot of benefits to the East African region to curtailing environmental degradation and climate change and providing reliable electricity and ensuring food security. Indeed, the East African countries are benefiting from Ethiopia's export of cost-efficient and reliable electricity.

Commenting on Egypt's usual "historic share" rhetoric in the Nile waters, the carrier diplomat highlighted that the



rhetoric emanates from the country's greed interest to maintain its hegemonic and unfair monopoly of Nile waters.

"We are telling them that the 1959 colonial treaty is no longer a binding accord as we all are free countries." We are the source of the Nile and eleven countries come together to determine how to use the common river without causing harm to one another. This is what Egypt is refusing," he said.

Thus, open communication and collaboration are essential for achieving genuine cooperation in utilizing Nile water. Countries must be willing to engage in dialogue, exchange information, and work together to solve common challenges. This can help to build trust and strengthen relationships among nations along the river.

Despite the importance of the Nile River for the socio-economic development of the riparian countries, cooperation among these nations has been hindered by various challenges. Historical disputes, competing interests, and lack of trust have often stood in the way of meaningful collaboration. In addition, the unequal distribution of water resources among the riparian countries has led to tensions and conflicts over water use and allocation. Addressing these challenges and building trust among the nations is essential for genuine cooperation to thrive.

Accordingly, genuine cooperation among riparian countries along the Nile River can bring a host of benefits for the region. By working together, these nations can ensure sustainable water management practices, promote agricultural development, and enhance food security for their populations. Collaboration on water infrastructure

Open communication and collaboration are essential for achieving genuine cooperation in utilizing Nile water. Countries must be willing to engage in dialogue, exchange information, and work together to solve common challenges

projects, such as dams and irrigation systems, can help optimize water use and maximize the socio-economic benefits of the Nile for all riparian countries. Additionally, joint efforts in areas such as fisheries, transportation, and tourism can further boost economic growth and integration in the region.

Different water experts also emphasize that by leveraging genuine cooperation among riparian countries, the Nile River can become a source of unity, prosperity, and sustainable development for the region. Through shared responsibility and collaboration, these nations can harness the power of the Nile to improve the lives of their people and create a more prosperous future for generations to come.

In sum, by working together, countries can promote sustainable development, improve water security, and create economic opportunities for the region as a whole. Through dialogue, collaboration, and investment in infrastructure, nations along the Nile can ensure that water resources are used in a responsible and equitable manner. By embracing genuine cooperation, countries can unlock the immense potential of Nile water for the benefit of all.

The Nile River, which flows through eleven countries in Africa, is a prime example of a water source that requires genuine cooperation among riparian countries for mutual socio-economic development. It is the longest river in the world, stretching over 6,650 kilometers and serving as a vital source of water, food, and livelihoods for millions of people in Africa. The riparian countries that share the Nile Basin must work together to ensure sustainable and equitable use of this precious resource.

Planet Earth

Farmers in Simbita Kebele conquer recurrent flooding and succeed in agriculture

BY FIKADU BELAY

Geremewu Mamenew, a resident of Simbita kebele in Halaba Zone, explains that in the past, the region of Weira Dijo Woreda faced significant challenges due to frequent floods, which made it difficult to engage in agriculture.

He elaborated the fact that in the past, the community residing in this area was heavily dependent on external aid due to the persistent and devastating floods that plagued the region. The frequent occurrence of these highly destructive floods rendered the land unsuitable for cultivation, depriving the residents of the ability to sustain themselves through agriculture or other means. Consequently, the community had no choice but to rely on aid as their primary source of support and livelihood.

The constant need for external assistance not only eroded their self-sufficiency but also limited their ability to develop long-term solutions for their difficulties. Due to the challenges faced and the limitations of aid dependency, the community made the difficult decision to be displaced and migrate to other places in search of more stable living conditions, he said.

With the support of the wereda's agriculture bureau and experts, and with the availability of underground water resources, the community started summer irrigation, focusing on the cultivation of crops such as bananas, mangoes, avocados, papayas, and a variety of other fruits and vegetables. This shift in agricultural practices allowed them to make optimal use of the available resources and overcome the challenges posed by the flood-prone soil, Geremewu noted.

Head of Agriculture Bureau at Wiera Dijo Woreda in Halaba Zone, Gobena Seman, told the Ethiopian Press Agency that seven out of the 26 kebeles in the area are severely affected by floods. To address this challenge, he collaborated with regional leaders and

experts to conduct research on the best crops to grow in flood-prone areas. They focused on implementing summer irrigation techniques and cultivating various vegetable crops. He emphasized that the agricultural experts provided the community with improved seeds and raised awareness for the communities to overcome these issues.

Endeshaw Tassewu, the Chief Administration of the Central Ethiopian region, highlighted the situation in the Simbita area, where the community has been reliant on aid for approximately two decades. However, he emphasized that the community is now actively engaged in integrated agriculture, indicating a positive shift towards self-sustainability.

He stated that before the years, the community faced the challenge of seasonal floods, which forced them to migrate to other areas. However, they have now adopted alternative measures by utilizing underground water for summer irrigation. This has enabled them to cultivate crops consistently and generate income by selling their produce to neighboring regions at affordable prices.

Integrated agriculture farms in the central Ethiopian region are gaining prominence as a sustainable and efficient approach to farming. This farm aims to maximize productivity and optimize resource utilization by integrating different agricultural practices and components into a cohesive system.

The main principle of integrated agriculture farms is diversification. Farmers in the central Ethiopian region integrate multiple components within their farming systems, such as crops, livestock, and agroforestry. This diversification allows optimal utilization of resources, as inputs from one component can be used to support and enhance the productivity of others.

For instance, the integration of crops and livestock ensures a nutrient cycling system. Crop residues and by-products can be used as feed for livestock, while animal manure serves as organic fertilizer for crops.

This closed-loop system reduces the reliance on external inputs and enhances soil fertility, leading to sustainable and resilient agricultural production.

Endeshaw proposed an ambitious agricultural strategy for farmers in the area. He remarked that the farmers work to apply the 30-40-30 Initiative. In this initiative, the farmers plant 30 different types of fruit in the first year, followed by 40 different types of fruit seedlings in the second year, and finally 30 different types of fruit in the third year.

This progressive approach would result in a total of 100 different types of fruits within a three-year timeframe. Consequently, within four or five years, the community would not only achieve food self-sufficiency but also stabilize their living costs by supplying their surplus produce to nearby local communities, he noted.

Geremewu mentioned that a turning point came when the 30-40-30 Initiative was introduced in the region under the nationwide food self-sufficiency initiative called Lemat Turfat. Inspired by this initiative, the community in Simbita Kebele organized themselves into an association and began working towards development and progress.

As a result of their collective efforts, he stated that the local community has achieved self-sufficiency in food production. The communities have been able to produce an abundance of fruits and a diverse range of food items, leading to a balanced diet for their children. This improved access to nutritious food has positively impacted the health and well-being of the community, he added.

In this sense, Geremewu emphasized that the increased availability of fresh fruits and vegetables has made it easier for them to maintain good health. The community's improved diet has had a positive impact on their overall well-being, contributing to their physical and mental health.

Furthermore, it is important to not only maintain food security but also safeguard the biodiversity of the

region. Agroforestry is another important component of integrated agriculture farms in the region. Farmers strategically plant trees and shrubs alongside crops and livestock to create a multi-layered system. Trees provide shade, improve soil structure, conserve water, and offer additional products such as fruits, timber, and fodder. This integration of trees with other agricultural activities promotes biodiversity, mitigates climate change, and enhances the overall sustainability of the farming system.

The state's farmers adopt a holistic approach to pest and disease control, relying on a combination of cultural practices, biological control agents, and minimal use of chemical pesticides. For instance, crop rotation, intercropping, and the cultivation of pest-resistant crop varieties are implemented to minimize pest pressure and maintain crop health naturally.

Moreover, integrated agriculture farms often prioritize sustainable and organic farming methods. Farmers minimize the use of synthetic fertilizers and pesticides, opting instead for organic inputs and biological control methods. This approach not only reduces the environmental impact of agriculture but also enhances the quality and safety of agricultural products, meeting the increasing demand for organic produce in domestic and international markets.

The Simbita community's transition towards integrated agriculture and sustainable farming practices has the potential to transform their livelihoods. By harnessing underground water for irrigation and diversifying their crop production, they are gradually becoming self-sufficient and even contributing to the economic stability of neighboring communities. The region's focus on integrated agriculture is a commendable step towards long-term sustainability and prosperity through addressing the challenges of farmers, he underlined.