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## 'Africa Celebrates' cherish continental narratives, Pan-Africanism spirit: Ambassador

• Showcases Ethiopian heritages, foster investment

BY ASHENAFI ANIMUT

ADDIS ABABA –Apart from promoting the Ethiopian endowments and investment, the “Africa Celebrates” event would be a powerful instrument to cherish African histories and the spirit of Pan-Africanism, the Burundian Ambassador said.

In an exclusive interview with *The Ethiopian Herald*, Burundi’s Ambassador to Ethiopia

See 'Africa Celebrates' ... Page 3 *Amb. Willy Nyamitwe*



## Authority appeals to gov't intervention to tackle plastic pollution

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

ADDIS ABABA- The government needs to take various interventions to tackle environmental, health as well as socioeconomic impact

See Authority appeals... Page 3



Aisha Mohammed (Eng.)

## Ethiopia's irrigation coverage reaches over 1.8 mln hectares

ADDIS ABABA (ENA) -The Irrigation and Lowland Areas Minister Aisha Mohammed (Eng.) has announced that Ethiopia's modern irrigation infrastructure coverage has surpassed 1.8 million hectares.

The Minister made the remark in a 9-month performance report of the current fiscal year

See Ethiopia's irrigation ... Page 3

## CSOs, think thanks optimistic about Ethiopia's BRICS membership

BY YESUF ENDRIS

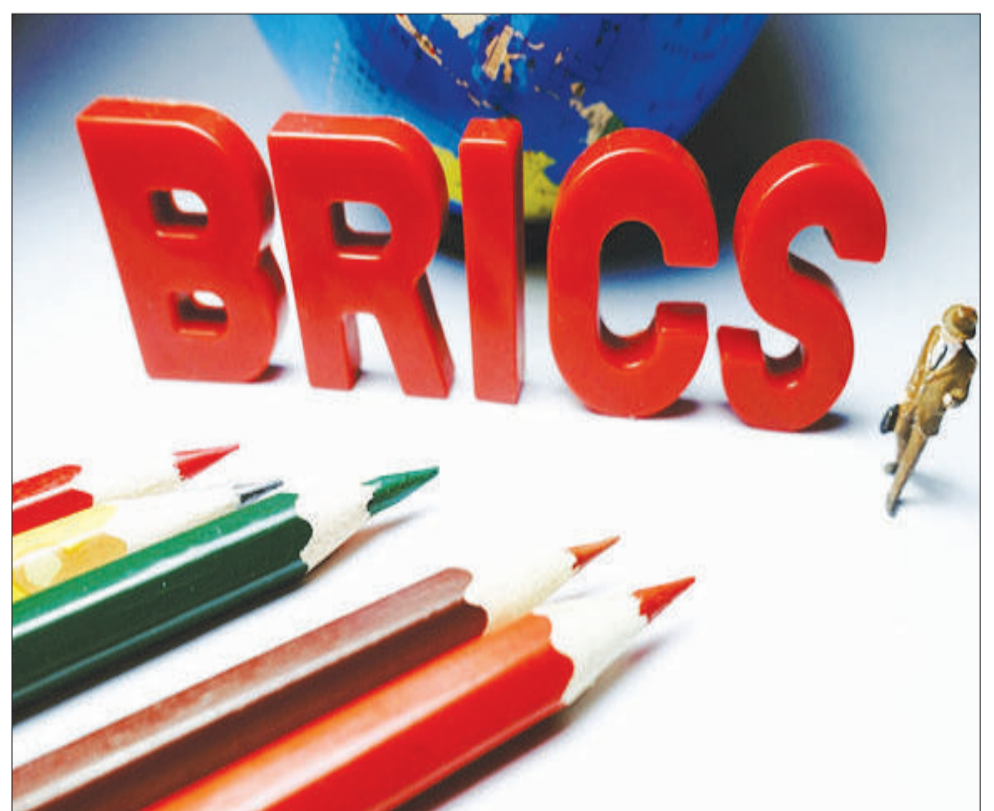
Ethiopia's official entry into the BRICS economic bloc has ignited optimism among civil society organizations (CSOs) and think tanks, heralding a potentially transformative phase for the country's global engagement.

As the BRICS Experts and Civil forum is scheduled for May 2024 in Moscow-Russia, Ethiopia is now preparing itself to participate and discuss major issues that it would raise as an agenda on last week's Russian BRICS Experts Council Forum.

According to international relations experts and CSO representatives, this move signifies a strategic shift toward deeper integration within the BRICS framework.

Ethiopian Civil Society Organizations Council President Nigusu Legese (PhD) said Ethiopia's accession into the BRICS

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How data analytics can transform Africa's marketing landscape

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Art exists for a reason Standup comedian Michael Senghazi

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WHO Africa advances African science by promoting Peer-reviewed research

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Hirut Kassaw (PhD)

## Bureau to announce formal dressing code in hotels

BY MESERET BEHAILU

**ADDIS ABABA** – Addis Ababa Culture Art and Tourism Bureau announced that a dressing code guideline will be approved and implemented soon to correct dressing style of the female hospitality professionals working in hotels.

Bureau Head Hirut Kassaw (PhD) told The Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that various activities are being done to correct the dressing code of females' hospitality professionals working in hotels aimed at promoting Ethiopian culture .

As to the Head, the dressing code of women in the hospitality industry is not in tune with country's culture. To end this, the dressing code guidelines for hospitality professionals have been finalized and sent to the Mayor's office for approval whilst the guideline approved soon and put in to implementation after a while.

Similarly, depending on the guideline, the aforementioned professionals will follow a uniform international dress code, which will help control the dress code that does not respect the Ethiopian culture and tradition, she cited. She further stated that when providing hospitality to tourists, it should be in accordance with the culture and values of the country. Therefore, the dress of hospitality professionals in hotels should be formal.

"In some hotels, it depicts that illegal dressing (informal) on women especially hospitality professionals is common due to enforced by the owners of the hotels. However, such action is shameful and disrespectful to the rights of the women," the head underlined.

Hirut also explained that in order to provide respectable hospitality in hotels, the Bureau provides training to about 2,000 working hospitality professionals per year.

Moreover, the Bureau is working hard to correct the informal dressing code in hotels hospitality professionals. Hotels that has not obeying the rule, it would be punishing whilst awareness creation among the hotels owners and professionals is being carried out, she elaborated.

## Experts highlight multilayered benefit on waste management

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

**ADDIS ABABA**- Proper use of inputs, chemicals and water would allow companies to enhance their capacity through recycling the waste easily and effectively , experts said.

In an interview with the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA), Textile and Apparel Industry Research Development Center Chief Executive Officer Abebe Teka stated that Textile and Garment industry is amongst the sectors that has huge waste disposal.

Research has revealed that over 94,000ton of waste is gained from the textile and apparel industry each year. Of which, 54% of the waste is used for various purposes such as mop while the rest would be dumped on lands, he said.

Thus, the Chief Executive Officer emphasized that the need to put a system that recycles this waste product properly. Moreover, the waste management needs to be carried out with knowledge as the waste serve as an input for companies that are engaged in waste recycling.

Lessons need to be drawn from different companies on how to segregate waste to feed the aforesaid companies, as to him.

He further highlighted that there is huge gap in waste segregation in various companies. To this end, he mentioned that a plan is set to adopt different mechanism from well experienced companies in this regard.

Moreover, companies need to focus on minimizing waste as it enhances productivity and competitiveness. "The more we reduce



waste, the more we increase our earnings."

Referring companies that recycle and reuse plastic bottles, he indicated that companies need to give due emphasis in minimizing waste is improving quality. Likewise, they need to avoid using hazardous chemicals.

Buluko Textiles Share Company Dyeing Expert Dereje Merega said that the comp[any has more than 2,800 employees and uses environmental friendly waste management system.

The company has put in place standardized waste management system that clarifies and segregate wastes which is helpful for recycling purpose.

Representing the Board ofEriko Textile and Garment Company that have hired over 1,200 employees, Tefer Worku stated that it produces fabric, yarn and garment after processing and changing the waste from textile factories in to fabrics.

The company recycles waste items into products using recycled fiber, recycled polyester fiber as well as waste cotton. He said after the recycling process, the waste serve as animal fodder.

"Most materials that are imported to the companies are not tested and harmful to the environment. To this end, waste management is becoming major issue in the nation. Our company is established with a vision to minimize environmental pollution through recycling waste in environment friendly way. We are also striving to become 100% carbon emission."

He went on saying: We are focusing on import substitution. The European Union has also pledged to provide tax incentives. If the incentive is granted, the company with the support of Ministry of Industry would increase its current recycling capacity from 3,000 tons to 15,000 tons per day through modernizing the existing recycling local recycling process.

## Idirs advised to extend focus to social issues

BY ESSEYE MENGISTE

**ADDIS ABABA** -A research conducted by Kotebe University of Education advised *Idirs* to extend their engagement from financing and arranging funerals to addressing the social issues of their members.

A study focused on the role and challenges of *Idirs* in Addis Ababa in collaboration with the Addis Ababa City Administration Women's Children and Social Affairs Bureau and Kotebe University of Education was presented to stakeholders yesterday.

Speaking at the event, Kotebe Education University Vice President Shimelis Zewudie (PhD) said that in addition to arranging funerals, *Idirs* must address its members' social concerns.

Shimelis stated that the purpose of the study is to indicate how the *Idirs'* problems could be solved and help them to update their practices, increase their economic capacity and social participation.

The research identified that many *Idirs* have been facing different problems including lack



Shimelis Zewudie (PhD)

of modern system to arrange their members' document, absence of legal framework policy, political and economic burden, lack of building space, shortage of funeral places and stiff bureaucracy. Also, they lack modern financial and property management system and their economic role is too small while their information management is backward.

The research also showed that the *Idirs'* role in supporting women and children is minimal and their focus is financing and

arranging funerals.

The research called on the Addis Ababa Women, Children and Social Affairs Bureau to pay more attention for *Idirs*, because they are institutions that promote greater cohesion and solidarity among the community.

The vice president pointed out that the research also pinned the necessity to *Idirs* to get training in financial procedures and management and the ease of the government's bureaucracy. *Idris* are also being advised to modernize their procedures and extend their engagement from funerals arrangement to the social and economic issues of their members and the local community at large,

"Some information mentioned the existence of 6,779 legal and functional *Idirs*, but we have got only 3,500 functional and legal *Idirs* and we collected the data from them."

The Addis Ababa City Administration Women's, Children and Social Affairs Deputy Bureau Head Genet Ketawsaid that *Idirs* are a community based organizations and the research was conducted to support social sector organizations in the metropolis.



## Ethiopia's irrigation coverage reaches...

she presented to the House of Peoples Representatives on Tuesday.

Aisha provided detailed insights into the progress made in various areas, including irrigation research design, irrigation infrastructure management, and the execution of research and development plans in lowland and pastoral states.

Aisha highlighted that the original objective for the fiscal year was to prepare 213,000 hectares of land for farming development.

However, the achieved progress has far exceeded expectations, with over 279,000 hectares already made ready for development within the nine-month period.

Furthermore, the Minister emphasized the significant growth in modern irrigation infrastructure.

In the previous fiscal year of 2015, the coverage stood at 1.5 million hectares, which has now risen to an impressive 1.8 million hectares in just nine months, she said.

Aisha also addressed the creation of employment opportunities through the expansion of the irrigation network.

According to her, the original plan aimed to generate jobs for 50,000 citizens within the nine-month time frame, and the implementation has already surpassed this target, benefiting over 84,000 individuals.

Looking ahead to the future, Aisha outlined plans to develop an additional 353,000 hectares by identifying suitable areas for irrigation expansion in the upcoming fiscal year.

The Minister concluded by emphasizing the remarkable progress in modern irrigation development, with the coverage having tripled from 490,000 hectares in 2012.

She expressed the government's commitment to continued intensive efforts in this field, ensuring further growth and development in the future.

## CSOs, think thanks optimistic about...

opens up new opportunities for the country to cooperate with the bloc's members not only on economic affairs but also in humanitarian and democracy building.

Nigusu (PhD) further highlighted that relations with key global players of BRICS members such as Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa are a crucial juncture for Ethiopia to diversify its humanitarian and development partners. He; however, cautioned the Ethiopian government should not be inclined to undermine its partnership with the Western world.

"BRICS is not something that stands against others. In fact, it supports institutional integrity among countries having South-South cooperation policies. On the other hand, Ethiopia is receiving a higher amount of humanitarian aid from Western agencies and countries. Therefore, joining the BRICS does not mean rejecting the West. I hope the government has the same stance on this."

Institute of Foreign Affairs Europe and American Affairs General Director Dareskedar Taye (PhD) also said that the formal accession to BRICS is instrumental in building institutional integration. "Ethiopia is now in its first year in BRICS, so more opportunities are expected to come."

The strategic engagement roadmap, which is under preparation, will define what things should come first and second, he added.

According to the expert, the major task that Ethiopia should engage in at this time is researching major BRICS agendas that could benefit its national interest.

The overall development, particularly with the BRICS Experts group, presents opportunities for policy discussions on a global stage and collaboration with the bloc counterparts. By engaging in the experts' forum of the BRICS, Ethiopians could build collective expertise to address common

challenges and leverage opportunities for mutual growth, Dareskedar Taye (PhD) emphasized.

Sustainable Environment and Development Action (SEDA) Senior Programme Manager Tiratu Belay on his part noted that civil society organizations are expecting a better future to benefit from the country's BRICS membership and global engagement.

In addition, Ethiopia's BRICS accession opens doors to diverse financial sources to back development projects. On issues ranging from sustainable development to human rights and governance, it will enhance cooperation within the BRICS framework and empower Ethiopian civil society to amplify their voices and advocate for meaningful change on both regional and global platforms, Tiratu remarked.

Ethiopia is officially part of the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) group of emerging economies in January 1, 2024.

## 'Africa Celebrates' cherish continental ...

Willy Nyamitwe stated that the event is a powerful platform for promoting African histories and the spirit of Pan-Africanism at large. Ethiopia would greatly benefit from hosting such an event as it has a strategic position for cultural and diplomatic activities across the continent.

Ambassador Nyamitwe also noted that the event would be a potential opportunity to display Ethiopia's culture, heritage and advancements on a continental stage, attracting tourists and building the country's positive image. Similarly, the influx of visitors for the event is believed to stimulate local businesses from hospitality to retail, boost the economy, and create more jobs.

"Accordingly, such gatherings would foster investment opportunities, as investors and business leaders experience Ethiopia's culture and potential. The event is also the mechanism for fighting stereotypes toward Africa and it should be our primary agenda to put our heritage and shape our common narratives."

Calling for consolidated support from the

national to the continental level, the Ambassador indicated that such collaboration would be a potential turning point for other nations to take homework from the host country.

Africa Celebrates President and CEO Lexy Mojo-Eyes on his part said that the event would be serving as a bridge that connects cultural heritages, women empowerment, youth engagement, diaspora connections, African peace work and many other activities.

"It has also the opportunity to bring all continental leaders and other international gatherings and showcasing our (Africans) arts, cultural heritages and extra miles of continental endowments."

Mentioning the significant progress that the event bears every year, he underscored, "We Africans are the only responsible patrons of our cases and for all Africans in all human endeavors by consuming our products, sharing our diverse cultures and many other blessings."

Moreover, bringing Africa together is a good

achievement and would be a triumph for the entire black people, he emphasized.

On the other hand, Ethiopian Local Partner of Africa Celebrates and Mayalz Events CEO Eyael Tamrat stated that Ethiopia, especially Addis Ababa as an iconic capital of Africa, has not benefited from this initiative, as it deserves.

The event is significantly beneficial to bring all Africans together and demonstrate continental diversity that helps bring a bearable future for the youth and new generation in a meaningful manner. "It is a matter of preserving and promoting our diverse culture, art and history among many others. Besides, it is also making our generation feet for the 21st Century," she stated.

They called on the government, private sector and other concerned actors to give prime attention and push the initiative onwards.

It was learned Ethiopia has been hosting the event for the last four consecutive years including this year.

## Authority appeals...

of plastic pollution, the Addis Ababa City Administration Environmental Protection Authority said.

Speaking to the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA), the Authority's Director-General Diriba Dida stated that 73,750 tons or 9% of garbage that is being disposed in the capital is plastic.

According to a study, Ethiopia's plastic consumption from 2017-2022 was

around 43,000 tons and currently it has reached to 224,009 tons, registering a 421% increase. In addition, the plastic per capita consumption increased from 0.6kg to 2.6kg in five years witnessing an 11% increase.

Diriba emphasized that animals are the primary groups that are affected by plastic pollution. "Let alone the impact it pose on environment and human beings, but animals immediately die when they

intake plastics."

According to him, the government needs to give prime attention to tackle the challenge. To this end, the incumbent has launched recently a national campaign, which would last for six months.

"The government should impose huge tax on plastic materials to discourage pollution. In addition, incentivizing actors who are engaged in plastic

recycling and implementing regulation that forbid plastic production are other viable measures."

Putting the regulation that force plastic producers to reuse the plastic for different purposes and build the community's awareness about the hazardous impact of plastic pollution are also measures that should attain equal consideration, the director-general recommend.

# Opinion

## Strategies to ensure food self sufficiency

BY GETACHEW MINAS

A country that produces enough food to meet the needs of its people is food self-sufficient. It is in a state or condition where its communities or regions do not rely heavily on imported food. A country that spends its foreign exchange on the import of food items may have to resort to agricultural development to reduce its reliance on imported food. Though agriculture is a major contributor to its Gross Domestic Product (GDP), Ethiopia has not yet been food self-sufficient.

Food self-sufficiency refers to a state or condition where a community, region, or country produces enough food to meet its own needs without relying heavily on imports. There are several reasons for the country to be food insecure. Recurrent drought and conflicts negatively affected the seasonal agricultural produces, mainly affecting food grains. Also, the rising level of inflation, which is caused by high demand for food in the face of shortages, has made food prices unaffordable by the working people. This situation has made people suffer from malnutrition and hunger. Also, the spread of social conflicts and diseases have made people unable to produce food in time.

Food security is often considered a desirable, attractive and popular goal for a number of reasons. Being self-sufficient in food production minimizes dependency on foreign sources. The major objective of economic development in Ethiopia is self-reliance in food production. Farmers are encouraged to be productive using modern techniques of production. These techniques include modern machinery, fertilizers, pest control, improved seeds, grain storage and marketing.

A large majority of Ethiopian farmers are using traditional means of production, the yield of which is low per hectare. In this sector, output is low and marketable surplus is almost negligible. With low income from the sale of grain, the farmers are mostly incapable of purchasing basic necessities from the open market. They are not in a position to use modern tech such as pest control or improves seeds or fertilizers for enhancing their productivity and, therefore, income. They are also confronted with social conflicts to which they devote their labor force, reducing their productive capacity to meet their duties as taxpayers.

Most regions in Ethiopia are less resilient to disruptions in food supply chains. These disruptions are caused by factors such as natural disasters, political instability, or social conflicts. Politicians who aspire for power tend to be restless as they find themselves away from the center. They tend to cause political unrest as a shortcut to the apex of power. Most of these politicians tend to become restless as they have no alternative means of livelihood. Addicted to public attention, they become infatuated

with power and authority as a shortcut to wealth and prosperity. Once in power, they tend to manipulate public revenues toward meeting their objective of swimming in leisure, happiness and relaxation.

In reality, access to power leaves those authorities full of activity, demanding their subordinates to work restlessly to meet the needs of the poor people of Ethiopia. This requires an elaborate strategy for enhancing economic development of the country. It may be translated into economic development plans, programs and projects for improving the living standards of the impoverished Ethiopians.

To fulfill the development objectives, economic stability is a precondition. Producing food locally, for example, can stimulate economic growth by creating jobs in agriculture, food processing, and related industries. The newly employed persons created demand for goods and services, which in turn require additional investment in various sectors of the economy. Investors may be attracted to come into Ethiopia thereby creating more output and employment. They may also engage in the export of goods and services that earn more foreign exchange.

Domestic production reduces the outflow of currency spent on importing food, goods and services. It may also bolster the domestic economy thereby raising production, employment and income. Food processing industries would definitely reduce or replace imported food, thereby minimizing foreign exchange expenditure on imports. The saving of foreign exchange is crucial for establishing additional manufacturing enterprises that may replace imported food, goods and services. These firms may use inputs that are critical for the production of export items that would substitute imports that dominate domestic markets.

Import substitution activities related to food may impact on environmental sustainability. Experts think that local food production may replace imported food items that contain preservatives and chemicals which may affect the health of consumers. Food items that are imported may have to be transported on ships that take longer time. Imported food items may require sustainable agricultural practices that are tailored to local ecosystems and climates of importing countries. However, these practices demand highly qualified experts to check the sustainability of imported food items in the importing country. To reverse all these problems related to ecosystems, the best strategy is domestic production of food items that replace imported one. This strategy contributes immensely to cultural preservation with emphasis on local food production and consumption. The pattern of consumption is also critical in the preservation of culture. Some consumers may still prefer imported food items.

Preservation of traditional food cultures

saves foreign exchange and creates domestic employment in the food production and processing sector. It also preserves the culinary practices enjoyed by Ethiopian households. These and other cooking practices foster a sense of identity and community pride. This pride also emanates from achieving food self-sufficiency which involves a combination of agricultural policies, support for small-scale farmers and consumers.

Food self-sufficiency implies investments in infrastructure which facilitates the flow of inputs into and outputs from the agriculture sector. Identification of the right inputs and outputs requires research in the sector that increase productivity and raise income. In the long-run agricultural development and its modernization contributes immensely to the increase in the gross domestic production (GDP) of Ethiopia. This leads to the creation of employment and generation of income for all involved in the production process. It contributes to food self-sufficiency, high consumption, improved health and higher standard of living for Ethiopians.

Complete food self-sufficiency may not, however, be feasible all the time. In some regions of Ethiopia that are not endowed with arable land and favorable climate, the residents and farmers may not enjoy improved standard of living. In these areas, certain food items may not be grown efficiently and productively. In such cases, experts suggest a balanced approach that combines local production with strategic imports. This approach is part of a strategy for food self sufficiency that combines the best of the existing alternatives. Generally, achieving food self-sufficiency involves careful planning, resource management, and a combination of agricultural techniques. The planning of resource allocation for enhancing efficiency contributes to productive use of inputs that minimize wastage. Planning involves strategy for implementation of programs and projects related to food self-sufficiency. It also requires monitoring and evaluation of resource allocation for achieving food self-sufficiency.

One of the strategies that are used to achieve food self-sufficiency is to assess the natural and human resources of Ethiopia. This begins with assessing available resources such as land, water sources, climate, and labor. Assessing these factors of production will help determine what types of crops or livestock are suitable for each and every region.

Agriculture experts stress on the strategy of crop diversification in which Ethiopian farmers may grow a variety of crops to ensure resilience against diseases, pests, and adverse weather conditions. This requires crop rotation to maximize soil fertility, minimize pests and diseases, and increase yields. Studies show that certain plants grown together may benefit each other by avoiding dangerous pests,

attracting beneficial insects, or providing nutrients to the soil. Another crucial strategy for maximizing crop production is water management. The implementation of efficient water management techniques such as drip irrigation and rainwater harvesting are critical for raising output per hectare. Also, mulching to conserve water and ensure adequate hydration for crops enhances productivity of soil for food self sufficiency.

Ethiopian farmers have to be assisted by agricultural experts in focus on improving and maintaining soil health. This may be done through organic practices such as composting and tillage. Healthy soil is essential for nutrient-rich produces and sustainable agriculture. The farmers also need to be acquainted with modern means to livestock rearing, which is a major component of agricultural development.

If is feasible, farmers may consider raising livestock for meat, eggs, and dairy. Experts may assist the farmers on how to choose livestock species that are well-suited to the environment and type of operation. Integrated “crop-livestock” systems can also provide benefits such as manure for fertilization. Added to this system is food preservation and storage in the farming community. Farmers may have to learn modern food preservation techniques such as drying and fermenting to store excess produce for the future. In this regard, proper storage facilities are also necessary for preserving the quality and longevity of harvested crops.

Agricultural experts are of the opinion that Ethiopian farmers should stay flexible and adaptive. Their opinion is based on the inherently unpredictable nature of farming. It is seriously affected by the seasonality of some crops that are seriously affected by slight change in the weather conditions or manmade problems such as delivery, marketing, storage of yields and related issues.

In any event, farmers have to be advised to get prepared for any eventualities. They may have to adapt their intent in response to changing circumstances. These include weather patterns, market demand, and emerging challenges like pests or diseases. Ethiopian farmers have to be alerted to weather patterns by the concerned agency. They have to be informed about market fluctuations, such as price, demand and supply conditions related to their produce.

Similarly, they have to be ready against emerging challenges such as pests or diseases affecting their crops or live stocks. Through implementing these strategies and continually adjusting to the reality based on feedback and experience, Ethiopian farmers may work towards greater food self-sufficiency and resilience.

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



# Editorial

## Discharging a noble continental mission

The African Leadership Excellence Academy (AFLEX) has indicated that it has trained 120 leaders from various African countries in the past two months. The academy which is a new institute in the country has been providing similar worthwhile training to aspiring leaders of the nation since its establishment. Its endeavor to extend its horizon to the continent is a commendable step towards achieving collective political and economic success.

History has it that despite its rich legacy of ancient civilization, Africa has been suffering under the occupation, colonization and infiltration of external forces from various sides. For instance, for centuries its citizens were vulnerable to the brutal slave trade which was spearheaded and run by Europeans and Middle Eastern traders. This has exploited the young, and promising workforces of the continent rendering them easily vulnerable to the subsequent occupation and partition of the continent by these forces.

African countries had sustained huge losses and embarrassment during the era of colonization. They still suffer from the aftermath of it. Several reasons could be mentioned for the continents falling under the yoke of colonial powers. But one of the big factors that contributed to the success of the people's struggle for liberation is the role of some wise pan-African Leaders.

Among the top leaders of the continent who had tireless work in the colonial and post-colonial struggle of the continent are Kwame Nkrumah, Sekou Toure, HaileSELLASIE, Nelson Mandela, etc can be mentioned. Acknowledging, documenting and promoting the wisdom of these leaders is very important as the continent still needs a strong leadership role.

Africa still needs modern leadership well versed in knowledge and skills to deliver the continent from existing local and global challenges. They also need to possess a strong pan-African stance as they need to work with zeal and perseverance as exhibited by the former pan-African leaders.

Africa still needs strong diplomacy at global stages to secure its position and interests. It has to realize the goals set by the United Nations under the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the African Union Agenda 2063.

It has to secure its interest at the UN Security Council so that it will cease to be a mere observer and become a decision-maker in the global organization where it is a significant part. The continent also needs to have an ideal position of say in international financial institutions like the IMF, too.

Currently, Africa is facing a looming threat from global crises like climate change, terrorism ... etc. Climate change is an imminent threat that is posing deadly challenges against the lives of millions of people across the world but more dangerously in developing countries like Africa. It is well known by experts in the field both in Africa as well as the developed world that the continent which does not significantly contribute to the global problem is facing the brunt of the problem mainly because it lacks the financial and technical capacity to fend it off.

Terrorism and cross-border crimes are also deep-rooted problems that could hamper the economic and political progress of the continent. Africa can be an integral partner in the fight against such threats, but cannot fight these evils alone. It needs to secure the concerted support of the global community.

In this regard, its leaders need to be highly skilled, well-informed, committed and vibrant enough to identify and realize the very needs, and interests of the continent and have the right calibre and zeal to stand for it in the global arena.

Therefore, AFLEX must update itself with all the necessary inputs and resources to produce capable and vibrant leaders. It has to involve more Africans both as trainers and trainees. This will have a big role in the bright future of the continent.

# Opinion

## National dialogue, transitional justice opportunities not to be missed by all Ethiopians

BY SOLOMON DIBABA

society.

A recent Statement by the National Security Council underscored on the urgency and importance of conducting national dialogue sessions across the country and the implementation of Transitional Justice Policy to ensure peace, justice and development in the country.

National dialogue processes should be inclusive, involving diverse stakeholders such as government representatives, political parties, civic society organizations, ethnic and religious leaders, women's groups, youth organizations, and representatives of marginalized communities. Ensuring the meaningful participation of all segments of society is essential for building consensus and legitimacy.

On the other hand, transitional justice mechanisms, such as truth commissions, can play a vital role in uncovering past human rights abuses, documenting historical injustices, and promoting accountability and reconciliation. Establishing an independent and impartial truth commission can provide a platform for victims to share their experiences, seek redress, and contribute to the healing process.

Transitional justice processes should prioritize accountability for past human rights violations, including extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances, torture, and arbitrary detention. Holding perpetrators accountable, regardless of their political or ethnic affiliations, is essential for restoring trust in state institutions and upholding the rule of law.

Victims of human rights abuses should be provided with reparations and redress, including compensation, rehabilitation, and measures to address the long-term impact of violations on individuals and communities. Ensuring meaningful reparations can contribute to healing, reconciliation, and the restoration of dignity for victims and survivors.

Moreover, national dialogue processes should identify areas for legal and institutional reforms to address structural issues that have contributed to past human rights abuses and social divisions. Reforming laws, policies, and institutions related to governance, security sector reform, land tenure, and access to justice can help prevent future conflicts and promote social cohesion.

National dialogue should also include cultural and historical dimensions, acknowledging the diverse cultural heritage and historical narratives of Ethiopia's different ethnic groups and communities. Promoting dialogue and understanding among different ethnic and religious communities can help bridge divides and promote a shared national identity based on mutual respect and recognition.

Engaging young people in national dialogue and transitional justice processes is essential for promoting intergenerational dialogue, addressing the needs and aspirations of youth, and building a more inclusive and sustainable future. Youth participation can bring fresh perspectives, innovation, and energy to reconciliation efforts.

Ethiopia may benefit from international support and collaboration in its national dialogue and transitional justice efforts. Drawing on international best practices, expertise, and technical assistance can strengthen the effectiveness and legitimacy of transitional justice mechanisms and promote accountability for past human rights abuses.

Overall, national dialogue and transitional justice are essential components of Ethiopia's transition towards peace, democracy, and social cohesion. By addressing past injustices, promoting reconciliation, and building trust among diverse stakeholders, Ethiopia can lay the foundation for a more just, inclusive, and resilient

A recent Statement issued by the National Security Council is more revealing. It stated that "In her long history of statehood, Ethiopia lacked the experience of settling political differences, disagreements and conflicts in a legal and peaceful manner through discussions and dialogues. Unfortunately, our politics hinges on zero sum situation. In our country, our political culture has been based on the desires of the powers that have assumed political power by force and continued to enforce their will through absolute control of everything at their disposal until they are forced out of political power."

The statement further added that "Peaceful political transition is not an end in itself but a means to ensure other overarching political goals. The challenges that the country is facing cannot be resolved only through corrective measures that are on the pathway. We have therefore tabled three pathways that would enable us to rectify our historical shortfalls. Resolving past political challenges through inclusive national dialogue and our political challenges from the recent past through convocation of transitional justice is important".

Ethiopia has a complex history marked by political repression, ethnic tensions, and human rights abuses. National dialogue provides a platform for addressing historical grievances, acknowledging past injustices, and promoting reconciliation among different ethnic and political groups.

In addition, Ethiopia is a diverse country with over 80 ethnic groups, each with its own language, culture, and identity. National dialogue can help promote social cohesion by fostering dialogue and understanding among diverse communities and building a shared national identity based on mutual respect and recognition.

The country is undergoing a transition towards democracy, marked by political reforms and efforts to strengthen democratic institutions. National dialogue can contribute to this process by promoting inclusivity, transparency, and accountability in governance and decision-making processes.

Addressing the root causes of past conflicts and grievances is essential for preventing future violence and instability. Transitional justice mechanisms such as truth commissions and accountability measures can help address impunity, promote rule of law, and build trust in state institutions.

National dialogue provides an opportunity for victims and perpetrators of human rights abuses to come together, share their experiences, and seek reconciliation. By promoting dialogue and understanding, transitional justice processes can help heal wounds, build trust, and foster reconciliation among different segments of society.

Transitional justice mechanisms contribute to strengthening the rule of law by holding perpetrators of human rights abuses accountable and promoting respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. This helps build confidence in the justice system and promotes a culture of accountability and respect for human rights.

A stable and peaceful society is essential for sustainable development and economic growth. National dialogue and transitional justice contribute to creating an enabling environment for investment, development, and poverty reduction by addressing social divisions and promoting social cohesion.

Overall, national dialogue and transitional justice are critical for Ethiopia's transition towards peace, democracy, and inclusive development. By addressing past injustices, promoting reconciliation, and building trust among diverse communities, Ethiopia can build a more just, inclusive, and resilient society for future generations.

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



## The Ethiopian Herald

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# Business & Economy

## How data analytics can transform Africa's marketing landscape

BY LEULSEGED WORKU

At the end of last year, the global data analytics market was valued at more than USD 61 billion. With expectations that it will top the USD 580 billion mark by 2033, providing organizations across industry sectors with relevant insights into data is becoming a booming business. For businesses in Africa, harnessing the right data sets most effectively to stay ahead of the curve becomes a competitive advantage, especially when it comes to marketing the brand to an increasingly connected customer base.

"At its core, effective data analytics requires an understanding of historical data to better plan for an uncertain future. It is one thing to accumulate vast amounts of data, but another thing entirely to extract actionable insights from it," Fisokuhle Tshivhandekano, Managing Director of Idea Hive South Africa, said.

The latest estimates show that more than 328 million terabytes of data are created daily around the world. Many analysts agree that 90% of all available data was generated in the last two years. From a business use case perspective, it therefore becomes a matter of trying to find an exceedingly small needle in a rapidly growing haystack.

"Companies and their marketing agencies must therefore prioritize identifying and analyzing the right data sets that align with specific business objectives," Tshivhandekano said. "This process should entail integrating diverse data sources into a cohesive framework. For example, customer behavior, market trends, socio-economic indicators, and the like are all essential in developing relevant brand campaigns tailored to the needs of specific market segments."

Big data analytics is vital to gaining that much-needed edge in challenging economic conditions. Those businesses that invest in this are projected to increase their profitability by 20% on average. Within the African context, where market dynamics vary significantly across regions, the ability to interpret localized data accurately is even more paramount.

"In a world where artificial intelligence (AI) has the computing power to deliver analysis at scale, people play an even more critical role in filling in the cultural nuances that are required to deliver effective communication solutions," Muriuki Murunge, Managing Director of Idea Hive East Africa, said.

AI excels in processing vast amounts of data in microseconds. But this analysis is not only a technological activity. It is also the human touch that brings an understanding of what is being analysed. Tailoring brand campaigns across specific markets in Africa requires experts who have local insights into what works from a cultural perspective. While good, AI does not bring this understanding



**Big data analytics is vital to gaining that much-needed edge in challenging economic conditions. Those businesses that invest in this are projected to increase their profitability by 20% on average**

to its analysis. It certainly connects the dots, but it takes a person to inject that with local relevance to bring value to the organization. This human-centric approach is how we, as a new entrant, are engaging with current and potential clients to gain a competitive edge as we grow our client base in East Africa.

"A survey has found that 80% of consumers are more likely to do business with a brand that can demonstrate an understanding of their cultural preferences. This means AI,

in combination with human insights, are essential to develop marketing initiatives that resonate authentically with local communities," adds Murunge.

Even though analyzing historical data is important, it has complex repercussions for future brand activities.

"We want to use the learnings of the past to make key decisions on the future. But it is also imperative that using cultural nuances to make educated guesses about the audience is key to driving effective communication. After all, not everything in the past is relevant to creating innovative solutions for a digitally connected society," Tshivhandekano said.

Therefore, by blending data-driven analytics with cultural intelligence, companies can make more accurate projections about what will drive innovation in an evolving market. According to research, culturally relevant marketing campaigns result in a 50% higher response rate compared to generic strategies.

"This underscores the need to inject cultural context into data analytics. Not only will this enhance engagement and relevance, but it has the potential to build a relationship of trust with customers," Tshivhandekano said.

There are challenges to consider in Africa when it comes to data collection. The digital divide adds a layer of complexity to analysis that requires a different approach than being completely reliant on technology.

"Understanding culture and how it impacts the socio-economic climate is key in delivering work that is tailor-made for the market. From

our perspective, we will continue to partner with local data collectors to expand on our already existing data tools," Murunge added.

Studies indicate that those companies that use local market expertise can experience a 30% increase in penetration and consumer engagement. This highlights how important it is to combine data analytics of the available information with local insights to deliver brand value.

"In the complex African environment, using customer relationship management (CRM) data can be invaluable for additional competitive advantage. Businesses can gain valuable insights into their customers' demographics, purchasing behaviours, and preferences," Tshivhandekano said.

An agency can use this and look at how this knowledge forms the foundation for crafting targeted and personalized marketing campaigns that resonate with specific segments of their audience. Companies that use CRM data can see a 73% increase in customer retention rates and a 65% improvement in marketing return on investment. It therefore makes good business sense to capitalize on this resource.

As we forge ahead, leveraging data as a strategic asset and acknowledging cultural diversity will undoubtedly move businesses across the continent toward sustained growth and relevance. Through strategic partnerships and a comprehensive approach to data analytics, companies can unlock untapped potential and lead the charge toward a data-driven future.



# Art & Culture

## Art exists for a reason

Standup comedian Michael Senghazi

BY GIRMACHEW GASHAW

*Michael Senghazi is a young stand-up comedian from Burundi. He is also an actor, salesman, and children's book author. In short, he is a multi-talented individual. This writer met him while he was in Addis for a stage performance and spent some time discussing African art and artists. Enjoy the reading!*

**How would you explain African art? Has it been given adequate space and time?**

I think African art is particularly beautiful in the sense that, while I may be biased because I am also African, I believe African art is beautiful. It is a way of expressing our identity. It allows us to express ourselves in a variety of ways. When I visit Ethiopia, I see the history and art that surround its people. This Yod Abyssinia traditional restaurant, where we are now exemplifies what I said. If you look at the ceilings and how they are painted, they discuss Ethiopian history.

Because if it is in the fabrics, basically every area of art, whether it is fashion, movies, or music, are a way to tell a story and show who we are. And that is why our art is so important. And it is important to have art ambassadors, in the sense that if Ethiopia's Ministry of Culture invests heavily in Ethiopian artists, they will be able to tell the story of Ethiopia, the story of Ethiopians, the story of everyday life, the history, the past, the future, and a glimpse into Ethiopia that most people are unaware of.

And this applies to every country, particularly Africa, because what people know about Africa comes from what they see in the news. Most of the time, they see negative news, such as hungry children and war. You might hear someone talk about the war in Ethiopia, and they are aware of it.

But do they know how rich Ethiopia is? Do they understand how wealthy the country is, not only in terms of minerals and other resources, but also in terms of people, culture, and that rich culture? The coffee is well-known, but you may not be aware that the oldest, or one of the oldest, Bibles can be found here.

You may be surprised to learn that Ethiopia is home to one of the oldest guns ever invented. You might not have known all of that. So art is a way for us to express who we are, where we've come from, where we're going, and what we think.

**Do you have a platform where African artists can contact each other and discuss African issues?**

I don't think there is a platform where all of us artists could come together and talk, which I believe we should, because you see this concept that was put together to talk about the culture of each and every country that we are celebrating, which we are here tonight.



It is a concept that needs to be promoted more so that countries in Africa can come together and celebrate their diversity, the beauty of our diversity. But, as you mentioned, we would most likely need a platform that would further unify us in order to discuss our issues and how we can rise higher. Because, you know, when you run alone, you can run quickly, but when you run with others, you can go further.

**Being a comedian, particularly a stand-up comedian, is extremely difficult nowadays. Is that not so?**

It is a concept that needs to be promoted more so that countries in Africa can come together and celebrate their diversity, the beauty of our diversity. But, as you mentioned, we would most likely need a platform that would further unify us in order to discuss our issues and how we can rise higher. Because, you know, when you run alone, you can run quickly, but when you run with others, you can go further.

**Being a comedian, particularly a stand-up comedian, is extremely difficult nowadays. What is your take on this?**

Yes.

**So, how did you become a comedian now?**

I believe that being a comedian is important because we all have different perspectives. We make people laugh, which relaxes them. Laughter is beneficial for the body, mind,

and soul. There's a reason why people say laughter is the best medicine.

However, it is also possible to use laughter to convey a message. I can come to you and make you laugh, even if there is a problem, war, or something else. For that brief moment, to promote peace and a positive message, I make you laugh while also reminding you of our similarities. You didn't know me before tonight, but after meeting me, you believe that not only am I good at in what I do, However, you may be interested in learning more about me, my background, my country, and so on. And vice versa: if I meet an Ethiopian stand-up comedian, even if the situation is difficult for us as artists in general, he makes me laugh. I'd like to know where that idea came from. You know, because the ideas we use on stage are from real life.

So, if an Ethiopian comedian approaches me and tells me about his daily life while making me laugh, I'd like to learn more about it. I want to learn more about his daily life. I want to learn more about an Ethiopian's daily life. I'd like to learn more about the culture and how they were raised, because we were raised in a certain way, possibly differently, in the way our parents treated us or spoke to us in a very funny way.

So I'm like, "Oh, so that's how your parents were; that's how Ethiopian parents are." And

then I'll tell you about mine. So, you see, being a comedian provides a glimpse into the comedian's daily life, the society to which he belongs, and the possibility, or opportunity, to spread a message and it is up to us as comedians, and artists in general, to spread the message of togetherness so that we can laugh while remaining together.

**Who influenced you to be a comedian?**

Yes, I believe my family did at some point, as did some friends who were already involved in the arts. I tried it. My success was simply out of luck.

You know, I was approached by a woman who saw me talking about a book and said, "How about you come to my cultural center and see if you like it?" And I was studying law in Rwanda, Kigali, with very few friends. So I was like, "You know what; let me go into the arts."

It could be a way, similar to how someone might participate in sports or try something new. So I went ahead and tried it, and let's just say I got caught up in it. I became engrossed in it, in a positive way; because it allowed me to blossom and become the person I am today.

**Do you have the opportunity to travel to every African nation to promote your profession?**

I've had the opportunity to travel to several African countries as a stand-up comedian, as well as a theater practitioner, actor, and comedian. And I've had the opportunity to travel to countries like Egypt, Tunisia, and Algeria. I've traveled to Uganda, my hometown, Burundi, Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Zambia, and South Africa.

So I've had a few of them, but I still have more to go to, and I'm excited to do so, to showcase what I can do, and to spread the message of togetherness, fun, laughter, and positive vibes.

**If you have any more points, please take a chance?**

All I can say to each and every artist, comedian, actor, or whatever type of art they choose as a means of communicating and showcasing their talent is that we have a responsibility through the gift that we possess. Let us use it correctly, and for the right reason. And I know it is difficult because I am one of you, but by God's grace, we will succeed and reach as far as the eyes can see, if not further.

And to those who may be able to assist artists, to those in charge of ministries of culture, to those in power, if they are listening to me, please understand that art exists for a reason. There is art to writing the word heart. It's really hot. We are the foundation of our existence, ourselves, and our community. We're a vector. Use us properly and assist us so that we can shine brighter in the name of our continent, countries, and communities.

**Thank you.**

Thank you so much.



# Indepth

## WHO Africa advances African science by promoting Peer-reviewed research

The World Health Organization's African regional office and partners published over 25 peer-reviewed articles in scientific journals in 2023 as part of efforts to address the imbalance in global research and ensure that Africa was better represented in the production of health research academic literature, a new report shows.

The office, through its Universal Health Coverage, Communicable and Non-Communicable Diseases (UCN) Cluster, published on a range of health challenges and diseases, including the risk of zoonotic disease in countries ranging from Uganda, Malawi, Tanzania, Ghana, and Nigeria, investigating infectious and non-infectious diseases, and public health approaches to ease Africa's disease burden.

This research is critical to the continent, says Africa's Regional Director, Dr. Matshidiso Moeti.

"The WHO African Region arguably bears one of the greatest burdens of disease globally. This has always been exacerbated by poverty, which, in the decade prior to COVID-19, was on the decline. Now, however, these gains have been reversed, not only by COVID-19 but by a series of severe shocks during the 2020–2022 periods," said Dr. Matshidiso Moeti, the Regional Director for Africa," she told IPS.

"Major threats include climate change, global instability, slowing economic growth, and conflict. This makes it ever more important that we at the WHO Regional Office for Africa focus on the central promise of the 2030 SDG agenda, which is to 'leave no one behind', using a health systems strengthening approach to move towards universal health coverage."

According to the Ending Disease in Africa: Responding to Communicable and Non-communicable Diseases 2023 report released in April, WHO scientists were able to publish their work in reputable journals, including the Social Sciences and Humanities Open, supporting Africa's efforts to raise her scientific research production, estimated at only 2 percent of the world's total.

The works also found homes in open access journals, including America's Public Library of Science (PLOS), where they are accessible for free by the scientific community and the general public.

Besides Africa-based scientific publications such as the Nigerian Journal of Parasitology, highlighting the need to support the role local publications can play in elevating African science and, by extension, helping address imbalances in global research.

"A country's ability to create, acquire, translate, and apply scientific and



According to the Ending Disease in Africa: Responding to Communicable and Non-communicable Diseases, WHO scientists were able to publish their work in reputable journals, supporting Africa's efforts to raise her scientific research production, which is estimated at only 2 percent of the world's total

technological advancements is a major determinant of its socioeconomic and industrial development. Many of Africa's current and future health challenges can only be addressed by conducting research on population-based approaches towards effective disease prevention and control, which are then translated into policy and practice," the report noted in introducing the work.

"Despite Africa's disproportionate burden of disease, the region produced 0.7 percent of global research in 2000, 1.3 percent in 2014 and an estimated 2 percent more recently. In response, the UCN Cluster and partners published over 25 peer-reviewed articles in scientific journals in 2023 as part of efforts to address the imbalance in global research, and ensure regional representation in academic literature."

In Ghana, the WHO team conducted a "community-based cross-sectional study" to investigate occurrences of skin ulcers, whose findings showed the importance of integrating multiple skin diseases on a common research platform in findings published by PLOS One, while in Tanzania, a "spatio-temporal modelling" of routine health facility data to better guide community-based malaria interventions on the mainland was done.

Some of the papers the WHO-Africa says were examples of "operational and implementation research," conducted to identify and ensure the successful adoption and adaptation of evidence-based interventions in both clinical and

public health on the continent.

They include findings from an impact assessment of a school-based preventive chemotherapy programme for neglected tropical diseases (NTDs), schistosomiasis, and soil-transmitted helminth control in Angola, where used drugs were found to have little impact in controlling the diseases. These findings were published in PLOS Neglected Tropical Diseases.

"This highlighted the need for a comprehensive understanding of individual, community, and environmental factors associated with transmission and consideration for a community-wide control programme," it concluded.

The Springer Nature's Malaria Journal published the team's research on treatment-seeking behavior among parents of children with malaria-related fever in Malawi. It captured the need for targeted health interventions among communities in low socioeconomic settings and those living far from health facilities.

In Nigeria, an article based on experiences in Nigeria using a novel schistosomiasis community data analysis tool, developed by the UCN Cluster, emphasized the usefulness of the tool for strategic planning purposes, allowing the tool to be deployed around Africa for the management of the disease. Blood flukes (trematode worms) from the genus *Schistosoma* are the primary cause of the acute and chronic parasitic disease schistosomiasis.

Research on health policy and systems,

the aim being to better understand how "collective health goals" are reached. This was done through a range of disciplines, including economics, sociology, anthropology, political science, and public health.

One such journal article was published by Elsevier's Social Sciences and Humanities Open, looking at five decades of infectious disease outbreaks on the continent and recommending that concerted public health action may help reduce outbreaks, as well as drawing important conclusions for disease preparedness and prevention activities.

Quite critically, the experts undertook "knowledge translation" work, the application of knowledge by various actors to deliver the benefits of global and local innovations in strengthening health systems and improving health.

"In the African context, knowledge translation generally includes an aspect of localization, considering local perspectives and approaches and the effects of the social, cultural, political, environmental, and health system context on an intervention's impact," the experts explain.

In 2023, the UCN Cluster translated and localized several global knowledge products for use in Africa, including one on oral diseases, a malady suffered by about 44 percent of the population in the region.

Africa, the document observes, has experienced the "steepest rise globally in oral diseases over the last three decades," even as spending on treatment costs remains "extremely low," thus the need to share the newest information on their management.

Away from scientific research, the report reveals that Mauritius became the first country in Africa to fully implement WHO's package of tobacco control measures, while at the same time WHO-Africa launched an initiative to support better access to breast and cervical cancer detection, treatment, and care services in Côte d'Ivoire, Kenya, and Zimbabwe.

Equally important, WHO Africa, in collaboration with Nigerian authorities, introduced the human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine into routine immunization schedules, targeting more than 7 million girls, the largest number in a single round of HPV vaccination in Africa.

Success stories emerged in Algeria, which successfully 'interrupted' the transmission of schistosomiasis after reporting zero indigenous cases for the past three years, in January 2024, and in Cape Verde, which became the third country to be certified as malaria-free.

**SOURCE: INTER PRESS SERVICE**



# Law & Politics



## A solid foundation to redress Ethiopia's major hurdles

BY STAFF REPORTER

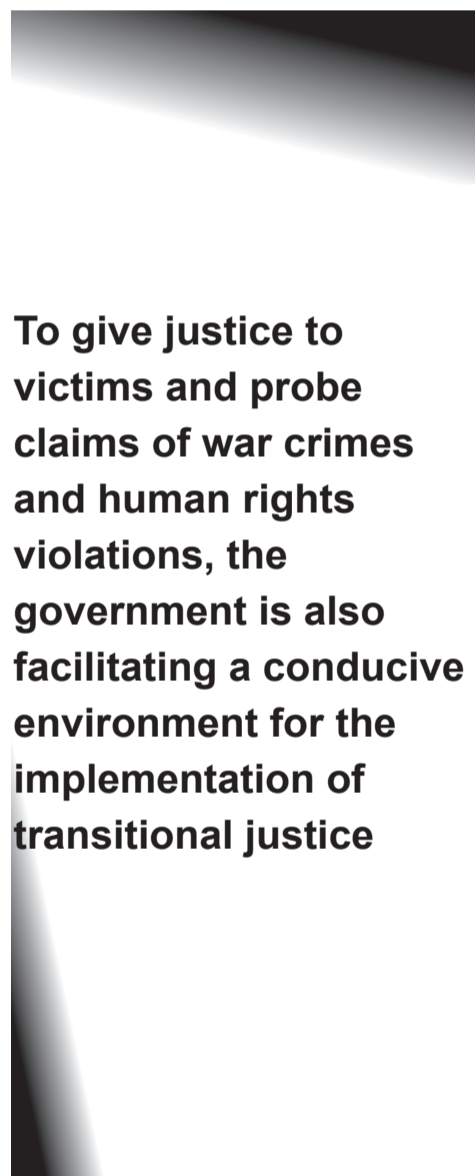
Ethiopia is putting in place a multitude of problem-solving mechanisms to address the existing and new political challenges resulting from recent circumstances, such as the conflict in the northern part of the country: the National Dialogue, the Transitional Justice, and the National Rehabilitation processes.

There has been a firm commitment from the government side to implement these mammoth measures. From signing and firmly implementing the Pretoria peace deal to forming the National Dialogue Commission, the government has been taking concrete steps to usher in the country on the path of lasting peace and stability. The bold measure of the incumbent to sit with armed groups and its consistency to enter into a peaceful dialogue have achieved relative peace in the northern part of the country despite ongoing conflicts in some pockets of Amhara and Oromia states.

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

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

On the other hand, to protect civilians, stop the bloodshed, and restore law and order, the government has been forced to use force. In this regard, the incumbent has made it clear that it has a constitutional mandate to keep law and order and ensure security. It is the government which has the



**To give justice to victims and probe claims of war crimes and human rights violations, the government is also facilitating a conducive environment for the implementation of transitional justice**

right to a monopoly of violence.

On the other hand, to rehabilitate militants and rectify victims, a rehabilitation commission has been formed and commenced work.

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

The process of identifying candidates who

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

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

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

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

These seeming toll orders are a must-do and will be instrumental to restoring lasting peace, redressing the years of political divisions, and paving the way for state building. In this regard, the contribution of all Ethiopians and the cooperation of the international community are imperative to making these grand initiatives a success.

The statement said the challenges that Ethiopia is facing cannot be resolved only through corrective measures; they require efforts to heal wounds that the country has inherited from history.

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

Peaceful political transition is not an end by itself but a means to ensure other overarching political goals, the council

noted.

Under the objective reality in Ethiopia, a government that assumes political power by winning elections should not just make decisions on overarching political issues; it should also address other significant issues that require inclusive engagement with all stakeholders.

Stating the commissioners of the National Dialogue, who were appointed to serve in the institution, are of high caliber and rich experience, and the statement indicated the law has empowered them with extensive power to conduct their duties of coordinating and conducting an inclusive national dialogue.

The commissioners have now charted out extensive outlines on how inclusive dialogue should be conducted by consulting with pertinent stakeholders, the council added.

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

According to the statement, the commission is expected to commence dialogue on regional levels within a few weeks.

The implementation of transitional justice, which incorporates international best practices, has also been a viable strategy to break the dichotomy between transgressors and victims in Ethiopia, it said.

The council further noted that over the past several historical incidents, various transgressions, heinous activities, and violations of basic human rights have been conducted in the country.

“Those who have hitherto assumed political power condemn and punish others by shifting the blame on others it considered as transgressors. Such an approach will never promote the prevalence of justice. It would only produce regrets and escalation of revenge. This is the major reason why a vicious circle of the desire for vengeance, revenge and unforgiving have prevailed in the country” the statement elaborated.



# Women in Focus

## Meklit Philipos: Living up to a childhood dream

BY LEULSEGED WORKU

She was born and grew in Hawassa town where she earned her first degree in Economics and master's degree in Business Administration. After graduation in Economics and Business Administration, she has also earned her DBA from France. Using her knowledge and academic performance, she served her country engaging in various government organizations. However, her passion to help the needy, specially, those commercial sex workers and street children was her primary vision and the ambition that she was always aspiring to make it a success. That is why she founded the Good Samaritan Family Support Organization where she supports impoverished members of the society.

Meklit Philipos (DBA), is the founder and Executive Director of Good Samaritan Family Organization- a local NGO where she realized her childhood vision of uplifting street children and commercial sex workers.

Using this charity organization, both Meklit and her husband provide all the necessary support for those unfortunate commercial sex workers. This includes psychological and necessary life skill training that can improve the lifestyle of commercial sex workers. Meklit and her husband are also aggressively working on those orphans by providing all the desired help and support them to reunite with their families.

According to Meklit, if we properly open our eyes, we can see several people around us who need our help. "This help, I am talking about is not a handout we commonly practice every day. They need our help in a sustainable way. It is my firm belief that as long as we breathe, we must think beyond our horizon. We need to see others. We must put ourselves into their shoes. It was my concern starting from my childhood. I used to ask myself consistently how I could help people in need. Whenever I have something to contribute, I don't hesitate to stretch my hands to the needy. It was my unique character in our family. I was not only good at helping people in kind. I was also good at listening to their problems attentively and giving them advice because I believe that listening to people's concerns is another way of helping them."

According to Meklit, beside her innate character to extend a helping hand to others, her parents were an inspiration to her future career. Like their visionary daughter, they were well known for their compassion. As medical practitioners, they knew what it means to pass through pain and the psychological reward of helping others. They were also active in charitable activities. For this reason, Meklit has had a strong desire to help others.

Meklit has totally given her time and energy for the sake of helping others when she accidentally met a pregnant woman who was about to give birth. This woman was raped and had no place to hide. She was also waiting for her labor. It was at this time Meklit found herself in a dilemma- to help or leave that pregnant woman. Her heart and mind were



fighting. Her heart won the battle. She took the woman into her house and gave her place to rest.

When she decided to give shelter to pregnant women she never saw in her life, there were several individuals who questioned her decision. This is particularly true to take a woman who is pregnant. However, Meklit took all the necessary care for that pregnant woman and gave birth to her son who is now ten years old.

"This experience has left me a good experience to help others and I took ten other street children to my home. It was after this incident I gave my time and energy to help people in need. My husband also has the same vision. He is always by my side to help the unfortunate individuals."

According to Meklit, helping others needs only compassion and feeling the pain of others. "When I sheltered individuals with mental health problems, street children or that pregnant woman in my house, I did not found a formal charity organization. I only had a big vision in my heart that I will have one day a charity organization that can help impoverished people. But this did not please some people. There were some individuals who doubted my mental health. This is especially true when they find out that I host some individuals with mental health problems in my house. However, my husband was backing my effort. This gave me more energy to help those vulnerable children with mental health cases.

As Meklit stated, there is no anything that gives satisfaction to the soul other than witnessing

**"Whenever I see those street children showing progress I get inspired to help more. Their progress is my reward"**

the progress of others. "Whenever I see those street children showing progress I get inspired to help more. Their progress is my reward."

"Inspired by the positive change that I can bring into the society, I decided to help more vulnerable children and women. And within the past six years, the organization was able to support several vulnerable children and women. We are also able to support not less than 300 sex workers who were forced to lead their lives selling their bodies and about 1,074 street children who benefited from our charitable service.

Using the various training the Good Samaritan provides, these women are now able to generate

their own income. What is more, we have also implemented feeding centers to those members of the society who cannot help them with food.

According to Meklit, all past success she witnessed in the area of helping others is a good sign that helping others needs not only money. All it takes is vision and commitment. A minor act of generosity can make a difference. The more we exert our time and energy to those vulnerable children and commercial sex workers; we are directly or indirectly helping the whole community.

What is more, most street children are prisoners of several addictions. They are in need of family love or support. That is why we need to show them the act of kindness and, if possible, stretch our hands to uplift them from their harsh conditions. That is what the Good Samaritan is doing. Using our professional psychologists and others, we try to help them to renounce all the addictions that put them into prison. Then, we give them proper medication and basic education. It is after these steps we will help them to find their families. If those street children have no parents or families our charity organization will look for foster families or provide all the necessary support to raise them within our institution.

According to Meklit, while the Good Samaritan performs its activities it works closely with the Women and Child Bureau and Justice Office.

Meklit believes that every street child or sex worker is our responsibility. This includes those individuals with mental health problems. We have moral responsibilities to stand by their side.



# Society

## Consistent, persistent actions to ensure durable peace, development



BY ELIZABETH MENGISTU

Over the past few years, Ethiopia has scored a number of impressive achievements in almost all areas. However, these feats were not gained simply, but rather through a number of arduous and tiring efforts that demanded a lot of energy and commitment. The country has gone through a number of tiring times and undergone testing incidents, mainly peace, security, and instability challenges perpetrated by various entities and occurring in various parts of the country, which have challenged it a lot and restricted its progress towards prosperity.

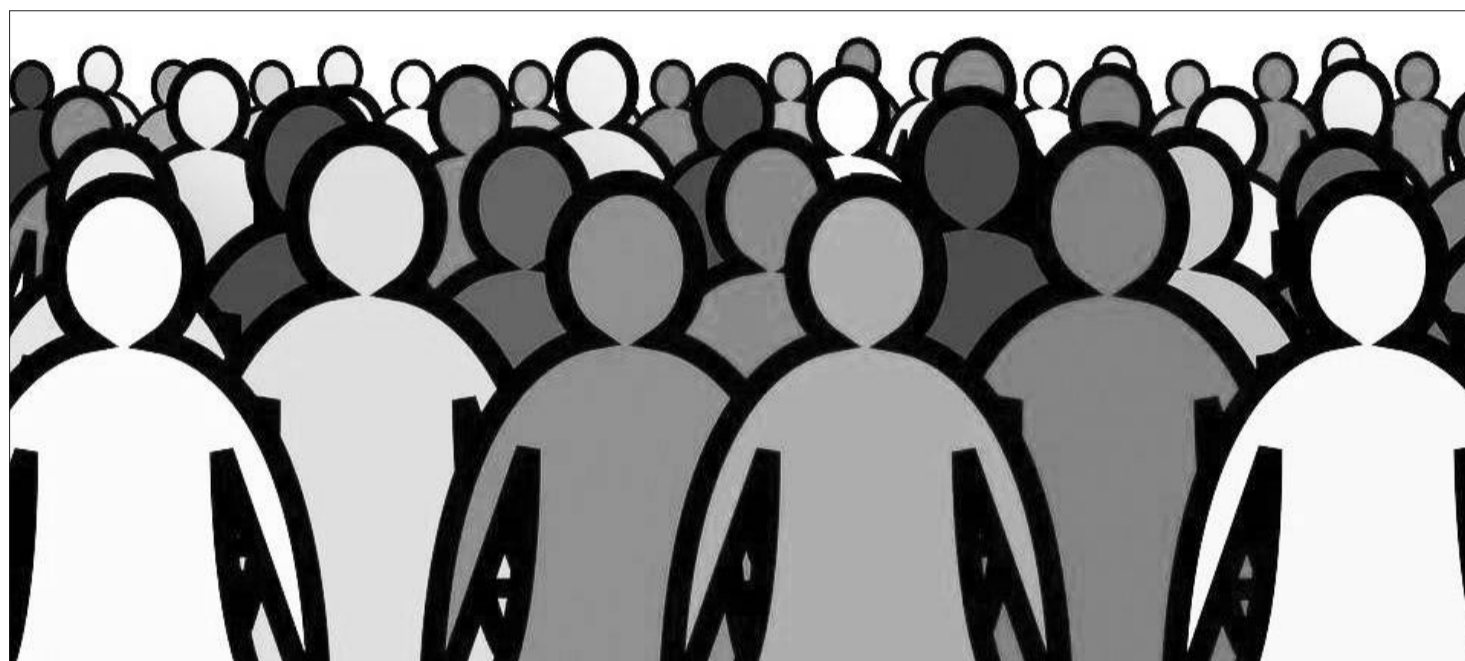
In fact, from the very beginning, the government has been calling on all parties that have different ideas and perspectives to come to the table for discussion. It has also been expressing its willingness and determination to discuss and solve problems with any entity. Going further, it has established a National Dialogue Commission. Currently, the Commission is undertaking various activities that lay the foundation for national dialogue.

Recently, while presenting the Commission's four-month performance report to members of the House of Representatives, senior leaders, and stakeholders, Commissioner Prof. Mesfin Araya revealed key preliminary preparations and activities related to the identification of potential participants in the national dialogue held in most regions and city administrations across the country. In areas where participant identification has not yet been conducted, it will be carried out through public meetings to identify possible agenda items and potential participants.

Meanwhile, the Ethiopian Press Agency had approached some stakeholders to have their insights regarding what should be done to arrest our common problem, ways to find a peaceful solution, what is expected from every individual citizen to make the national dialogue a success and ensure lasting peace in the country.

According to the Ethiopian Evangelical Churches Union President Pastor Tsadiku Abdo, as a nation to maintain peace, it requires the active participation and commitment of every citizen, starting from family level. Especially, for the reason that the primary responsibility of the government is to ensure the peace and security of its citizens, it should be determined and act accordingly to resolve conflicts in a peaceful manner.

Likewise, any party who may say that his rights have been violated, or anyone who



complains that his/her interests are not guaranteed, should be ready to listen to the opinions of others and resolve disagreements through discussion and peaceful dialogue; understanding that every contention can be addressed and arrested at the peace table.

"We have to be cautious and responsible so that our activities to ensure our interests should not put other peaceful fellow citizens in a precarious situation and cause harm to them."

There is a rule that is called the "golden rule" in all religious teachings. That is "Don't do anything to other people that you don't want other people to do to you." Respecting this rule and acting accordingly enables us to resolve all the challenges that hinder peaceful engagements.

According to Pastor Tsadiku, attempting to ensure peace through the efforts of merely some certain parties is considered as clapping with one hand. Thus, the government, political actors, religious institutions, interest groups, the people and other stakeholders are expected to do their level best and play part for peace. Mainly, religious institutions should preach peace and teach their devotees to defend peace and act accordingly. "We, religious fathers, should also be a living role model for our followers by leading lives that testifies the creeds we are teaching."

According to the Pastor, it is important to realize that each of the activities every individual citizen is carrying out have their own contributions in terms of sustaining or disrupting peace. The efforts undertaken to bring about solutions by force if not harming the people will not yield the desired outcome.

### Peace cannot be ensured only by the desires and activities of certain parties

Therefore, it is not only necessary but also mandatory to give due attention to the ideas of others, respect each other; and be committed enough to find solutions to problems through peaceful dialogue and discussion, Pastor Tsadiku advised.

The Executive Member of the Joint Council of the Ethiopian Political Parties, Mebratu Alemu (PhD), said on his part that the conflicts and instability that arise in different parts of the country are causing loss of life, destruction of property, displacement, and humanitarian crises. Such problems can only be solved when we develop the culture of tolerance and can listen to each other. To this effect, it is necessary to create inclusive discussion and consultation platforms. In this regard, political parties, civil associations, religious institutions, and the government are expected to be

active participants, he said, adding that the National Dialogue Commission is currently working determinedly to stop the conflict and strengthen the social interaction between the government and the people. "Therefore, before moving on to conflicts and attempting to resolve differences through firearms, it is necessary to put on the table all the

queries that we have and fight with determination to find a solution in a peaceful way," he reiterated.

The other possible solution to ensuring lasting peace is to carry out political reform. Thus, starting with the constitution, inspecting institutions and making them part of the solution is equally important, he emphasized.

Equally important, addressing historic grudges that are witnessed across the country,

providing the appropriate support to the areas affected by the conflicts, and creating a favorable platform for peaceful dialogue and discussion is fundamental.

What is more, in order to make the political system healthy, it is necessary to raise awareness among leaders of political parties, social activists, and media practitioners on ways to increase the culture of dialogue and tolerance. Peace cannot be ensured only by the desires and activities of certain parties. For this reason, starting with the government, all stakeholders are expected to discharge their responsibilities unwaveringly. He remarked that the government, political actors, interest groups, religious institutions, the people, and other stakeholders should work together to achieve lasting national peace.





## Published Weekly in Collaboration with Haramaya University

### HU provides job search, entrepreneurs training to prospective students

BY EPHREM ANDARGACHEW

Universities can encourage prospective graduate students in a variety of ways. Among other things, job search training is essential for prospective graduate students as they prepare to enter the workforce and begin their careers.

Besides, job search training helps graduate students learn important skills such as resume writing, cover letter writing, networking, interviewing, and negotiating job offers. These abilities are required for successfully navigating the labor market and obtaining work possibilities. The training is also important for increasing confidence, broadening job search techniques, knowing the market, and optimizing career chances.

More significantly, job search training is critical in preparing prospective graduate students for the job market, providing them with the tools, skills, and confidence required to acquire satisfying employment opportunities and establish successful careers.

In light of this, Haramaya University (HU)



has launched a job search and entrepreneurs training program for prospective graduate students. For the second time this year, HU collaborated with Derja.Com. to arrange this training. As a result, this program has over 150 prospective graduate students enrolled.

Haramaya University Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Directorate Associate Director Dr. Pawlos Wasihun said that HU has been working with Derja.com for the last five years, and this year, the organization has trained 305 graduate students in two rounds.

This program is particularly unique in that the directorate arranges a job fair display following the training, with the goal of connecting companies and job-seeking graduates to enhance work chances for students, he noted.

Derja.com Representative Mekonnen Mengesha stated that the major goal of the training is to reduce unemployment not only by generating diverse work options opportunities but also by preparing graduates to become job creators/entrepreneurs.



In particular, it is a training that provides training and understanding to students on how to look for a job after graduation and what kind of preparations they should make to compete for employment.

The training will be provided in person and online for three months. hence, the training is intended to equipped students on how to improve skills such as communication, self-confidence, critical thinking, and others required for employment after graduation, he stated.

## New study series set to highlight Africa's economic impact globally

Meg Whitman, once at the helm of giants like Hewlett-Packard and eBay and now the US Ambassador to Kenya, reportedly once dismissed Africa's business potential—a view she now admits was a major oversight.

This reversal isn't surprising. Africa, with its 1.2 billion people, is poised for explosive growth. By 2050, it is expected to house a quarter of the global population, with Nigeria projected to surpass China as the world's second most populous country by 2100. Moreover, with 70 percent of its population under 30, Africa is on the brink of becoming one of the largest consumer markets worldwide. Indeed, Africa is a continent primed for transformation.

Yes, numerous hurdles remain. Currently, 600 million people across the continent lack access to reliable electricity. Furthermore, a recent report by the One Campaign reveals that one in five emerging markets and developing countries spent more on debt service in 2022 than they received in external financing. This ratio could increase to more than one in three by 2025. Energy poverty and unsustainable debt levels are significant challenges that the

continent must overcome to realize its full potential.

However, there's a growing momentum to tackle these challenges. Recently, in Nairobi, Kenya's President Ruto brought together African heads of state to advocate for a significant new investment in the World Bank's International Development Association (IDA). Addressing his peers, President Ruto emphasized the need for solidarity, urging partners (i.e. wealthy nations) to boost their IDA contributions from the \$93 billion raised in 2021 to at least \$120 billion by 2024.

In this endeavor, African heads of state found a new ally in Nir Bar Dea, CEO of Bridgewater. He announced that the hedge fund he leads, recognizing Africa's potential over the next 50 years, will publish a series of research studies later this year in support of IDA. The premise is clear: increased public investment from wealthy nations will attract private sector financing. This initiative comes at a crucial time, as governments globally face headwinds and pressure to reduce public funding. Hopefully, it will resonate with treasury departments worldwide, providing officials with

the necessary ammunition to advocate for heightened investment in IDA.

Of course, while advocating for bolstered support for IDA, it is essential to recognize that realizing Africa's potential requires improvements within institutions like the World Bank. As highlighted by Ajay Banga, the World Bank's leader, during Monday's Nairobi summit, there is a pressing need for these institutions to evolve - to be "better." As the summit unfolded, a coalition of civil society advocates issued a letter to World Bank governors and deputies, emphasizing that a reformed IDA must prioritize and enhance support for civic engagement and civil society involvement across all IDA operations. This includes elevating transparency, accountability, and ensuring that equity promotion is integral to all IDA investments. Ultimately, citizen-led accountability is paramount to effective delivery.

We must also confront the reality that sustaining the requisite public investment—to bolster human welfare, foster inclusion, and promote sustainability—encompasses a range of critical endeavors. More financing is needed across the board to bolster

efforts to combat climate change and pandemics, enhance access to healthcare, nutrition, and renewable energy, fortify food security, bolster national resilience against emerging threats, advance gender equality, and catalyze job creation and economic transformation. However, ensuring the longevity of such investment will necessitate the exploration of new funding sources. Ultimately, these resources must be derived from innovative avenues.

This may sound impossible, but a recent report published at the annual World Bank spring meetings in Washington, DC identified six feasible strategies to generate additional funding, totaling at least \$675 billion annually, have been proposed without the need for prolonged global negotiations. These include implementing a wealth tax on billionaires, introducing a financial transaction tax, levying taxes on fossil fuel extraction, and phasing out fossil fuel subsidies. These measures, supported by proven examples and existing frameworks, offer tangible solutions to financing global challenges such as climate change and development.

Source: Forbes.com