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Julian Wright (PhD)

UK identifies HoA focal point in addressing climate change

- Hails Ethiopia's green economy strategy

BY GIRMACHEW GASHAW

ADDIS ABABA-The Horn of Africa (HoA) is a key focus area for the United Kingdom in addressing climate change, the UK's Foreign, Common wealth, and Development Office in Africa said.

See UK identifies ... page 3

DP expects uptick in Horn trade as Ethiopia dips toes in business

BY DESTA GEBREHIWOT

BERBERA- The Emirati-owned logistics company Dubai Ports (DP) World expects an uptick in its business and regional trade because of Ethiopia's increasing presence in the Berbera Port.

Welcoming the MoU inked between Ethiopia and Somaliland, the DP World Berbera Economic Zone Head Joseph Oguta noted that the logistics firm sees a boost in its business activities and regional trade volume.

DP World, which has facilities in half a dozen countries in the African continent, said its

special economic zone will also facilitate investments in the region, offering logistic services to companies in these zones.

Berbera Port carries lofty opportunities to catalyze trade and business in the Horn of Africa (HoA) as DP World aims to offer

See DP expects ... page 3



Nassise Chali

Ethiopia amasses 3.2 bln USD from tourism in 9 month

- Over 48.8 bln Birr secured from domestic visitors

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

ADDIS ABABA- Ethiopia generated some 3.2 billion USD from international tourists during the past nine months of the current

See Ethiopia amasses ... page 3

Ethiopia bridging China-Africa ties

BY YESUF ENDRIS

ADDIS ABABA - Ethiopia is bridging China with Africa, said Ethiopian and Chinese diplomats as the two discussed Ethiopia's role on the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation-(FOCAC) yesterday.

During a high level conference organized by Ethiopian Institute of Foreign Affairs (IFA), Ministry of Foreign Affairs Chief of Staff, Ambassador Eshete Tilahun said that Ethiopia would continue the role it plays on the FOCAC platform that promotes Africa-China ties.

"Areas of collaborations are available and we need to explore them to do the best for the future of this vital cooperation. The partnership between Ethiopia with China is not only benefiting Ethiopia itself, but also for all sides including other African countries," he said.

See Ethiopia bridging ... page 3



Ambassador Eshete Tilahun



Yang Yihang (PhD)

Photo: Dagne Abera

News

Debre Birhan on move to industry hub

BY MESERET BEHAILU

ADDIS ABABA – Debre Birhan Town Administration announced that some 167 factories are under construction and many others are making requests to build new industrial units.

Debre Birhan Deputy Mayor Bedlu Wubshet told the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that the town continues to be the center of gravity of investment, and many investors are still making requests to build their factories.

Having been supplemented by the Made in Ethiopia movement, the town administration has managed to put 20 factories into production. In addition to this, 18 other factories have put in machines that enable them to produce and they are expected to start production soon, the deputy mayor added.



Some 167 factories have received investment permits in the town and they are under construction. Many investors are still making requests to get land for their projects. The administration transferred 52 hectares of land to more than 60 investors

in nine months.

Bedlu further highlighted that the administration supported investors who were supposed to enter into operation in nine months to commence construction.

As a result, a first warning was given to 40 factories, a final warning was given to another 22 and the land that was transferred to 12 factories which were unable to commence operation was confiscated and put into the land bank.

“Although there is a security impact in the flow of investment, there is improvement every year and now there is peace in the town, many more infrastructures and good governance works are being done from the investment.”

Discussions are being held in all areas regarding maintaining the peace of the town and the administration will work diligently to increase the flow of investment and ensure that Debre Birhan residents are provided with housing by maintaining the relative peace that has been gained, the deputy mayor remarked.

Investing on human capital vital to achieve 10 year plan: ECCSA

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

ADDIS ABABA – Ethiopia requires promoting practical knowledge to achieve the Ten-Year Perspective Plan with competent human capital, Ethiopian Chamber of Commerce and Sectoral Associations (ECCSA) said.

ECCSA President Melaku Ezezew (Eng.) recently told journalists that the nation should work more on nurturing competent manpower to achieve the Ten Year Perspective Plan, which includes improving local production and import substitution.

He mentioned that about one million citizens graduate each year from Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions and Universities though they are not getting jobs successfully.

According to him, graduating a million people yearly is not a guarantee for successful economic development. He said, “We know that private or public industries need qualified professionals. Thus, TVETs should recruit vibrant students and equip them with the knowledge and skill required by the industry.”

Melaku also expects employers to provide consistent training to employees to improve competency which he thinks crucial to achieve national development for curbing shortage of skilled human capital in the sphere.

“If both (TVETs and employers) continue in this way (offering practical training), we can get more skillful experts and benefit from brain circulation, beyond exporting coffee or other agricultural products,” he said.

He believed that sending skillful experts for employment pay off the nation in terms of remittance. “Thus, we need to enhance such development and the Chamber will highly work with the Ministry of Labor and Skills to this end.”

The aim is to create knowledgeable and skillful persons as per the demand of the industry rather than increasing unskilled graduates having a degree or diploma certificates without competency, he said, emphasizing that the teaching learning process should be founded on practical knowledge.

The bond between the private and public sector is weak; as a result, ECCSA doesn’t set goals so far. However, to change this scenario, the President said his Association has started giving recognition to industries and commercial institutions who registered noble success so that others will follow in their footsteps, he noted.

According to the government’s Ten Years Perspective Development Plan regarding the home grown economic reform, the private sector plays a leading role. Without the private sector involvement, the TVET training program strategy cannot be achievable, Melaku said.



Bokoji to host 3rd annual great run

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

ADDIS ABABA-Preparations have been finalized to host the 3rd annual Great Bokoji Run on Sunday May 26, 2024, the Ministry of Tourism disclosed.

Briefing journalists on Monday, Tourism Minister Nasise Chali said that Bokoji, which is the home of famous Ethiopian athletes who have honored their country on the Olympic stage and won various international competitions, is still producing promising athletes.

The Ministry of Tourism, in collaboration with the Great Ethiopian Run will held the Great Bokoji Run in the mountainous areas of Arsi. “This event sought to expedite local tourism and culture as well as promote the expansion of sport tourism in Ethiopia.”

As to Nasise, sport tourism not only attracts

travelers seeking an active and dynamic experience but also brings about substantial benefits for local economy.

“This event is an instrumental tool to promote and expand national and local tourism. Owing to the Great Bekoji Run, the town is experiencing increased revenue from tourism and witnessed remarkable progress in infrastructural development.”

On her part, Bokoji Mayor Birhane Legese said that the town is the pillars and origin of prominent Ethiopian athletes and great runners.

The Mayor also noted that preparations are well underway and the town is ready to welcome about 1,500 guests that are expected to take part in the great run.

This sporting event mainly aimed at cultivating and recruiting future athletes in the nation in long run, she stressed.

Hospital offers free medical services to discharge CSR

BY ESSEYE MENGISTE

ADDIS ABABA- With a view to discharging its corporate social responsibility (CSR), the Ethio-Istanbul General Hospital (EIGH) has been heavily engaged in providing free medical services for children with heart disease.

The hospital recently performed major heart surgery on a nine-year-old patient, which is said to differ from other heart operations that have been done in the country.

In a press conference he held on Monday, EIGH Founder and CEO Berhan Tedla stated that the hospital is providing free medical services to 300 heart patients that are in-waiting to get the

support for long in the Children Heart Fund of Ethiopia (CHFE).

Due to the CHFE’s limited capacity, there are a large number of child heart patients and the hospital is playing a role in easing the problem and it has so far conducted 12 heart surgeries.

“In addition, the hospital is working to enable citizens with heart problems to be successfully treated in their own country without the need to go abroad.”

It is to be recalled that during the inauguration of the Defense Hospital, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) gave the direction for building the capacity to carryout medical treatments

locally. In this regard, the EIGH has been relentlessly working to the realization of this national goal. Berhan claimed.

“We have imported ultramodern medical equipment that enables treatments with different complexities to be done in the country. The treatments are mainly based on heart surgery, nerve, bone and related areas.”

Since its establishment some eight months ago, the hospital has registered notable successes in conducting treatments in local capacity and lessening the trend that forced patients to go abroad to get medical support,

In order to extend services and increase the

number of patients it has treated, the hospital has submitted the land request from the government, the CEO remarked.

Regarding the treatment, Shibikom Tamrat (MD), who led the operations, said that the child’s heart treatment was successfully performed as a result of team work. The heart surgery, which took more than eight hours, was complicated by the fact that the baby’s heart was supposed to be on the left side while it was on the right side.

The patient’s biological father, Jimma Edo, expressed gratitude for the medical staff of the hospital for their support.

News

UK identifies HoA focal...

Owing to the universal nature of climate change, the UK is working to combat the problem globally whereby HoA is among the focus areas, the Office Head Julian Wright (PhD) told *The Ethiopian Herald*.

“We have various interventions in place, such as the Weather and Information Services for Africa (WISA) program, which provides climate projections, seasonal forecasts, and early warnings to help communities prepare for droughts and other climate-related challenges.

The office head also stated that the office works on social protection programs in collaboration with governments in countries like Ethiopia and Kenya to ensure a climate-responsive approach. Also, the office is assisting countries including Somalia in accessing climate finance to support their climate resilience efforts.

Countries like Nigeria and South Africa,

which heavily rely on fossil fuels, face different challenges compared to countries like Ethiopia, where transitioning to sustainable energy may be more feasible, he said, adding that the response to climate change impacts has been mixed, with countries developing their nationally determined contributions under the Paris Agreement.

Africa is a diverse continent, and different countries are taking varying approaches to addressing climate change. “Some countries have more ambitious plans, while others have less. Each country faces unique challenges based on its resources and capabilities,” Wright (PhD) elaborated.

Indicating that the UK is currently focused on making climate finance more accessible to Africa and reforming the international financial system to address debt challenges, he said, “We are introducing climate-

resilient debt clauses and contributing to loss and damage funds to support countries impacted by the climate crisis. Our initiatives, such as the Ayrton Fund, aim to promote energy solutions in Africa and attract private investment in key sectors like energy and agriculture.”

According to Wright, his office is encouraged by the Ethiopian government’s efforts to build a green and resilient economy and desirous of supporting the latter’s ambitious measures in tackling climate change. “I am optimistic about the level of ambition demonstrated by the Ethiopian government in addressing climate change and integrating it into the development agenda.”

Ethiopia, as a highly vulnerable country with significant energy needs, is taking positive steps towards a sustainable future. The key now is to ensure effective delivery of these measures, the office head emphasized.

Ethiopia...

Ethiopia has been demonstrating resilient commitment on making a pivotal role as a bridge between Africa and China. The FOCAC is instrumental in fostering cooperation and a testament to the shared aspiration and mutual respect and collaborative spirit in underpinning the partnership, according to him.

Ethiopia believes that the world is undertaking transformative diplomatic activities in which the China-Africa partnership is critically needed to make new approaches. Ethiopia, as a country having a fast growing economy and strategic location, can also help China to have better diplomacy in Africa, he described.

China should consider trade balance and debt sustainability, he said, adding that expanding initiatives like the belt and road projects in Africa is also important.

He further stated that China and African countries should have forward looking approaches on societal and environmental issues beyond economic affairs.

Asia-Pacific Affairs Research Director General at IFA, Anteneh Getachew (PhD) noted that the FOCAC brings opportunities amidst global diplomatic challenges.

China is actively engaging in Africa in investment areas of infrastructural construction, trade and investment, science and technology, he said.

“We collectively envisioned sustainable development and inclusive growth. It needs to be ensured by transparent and shared responsibility,” he remarked.

Minister Consular of the Chinese Embassy in Ethiopia, Yang Yihang (PhD) also said that Ethiopia is an important participant in the China-Africa cooperation and the second China-Africa forum was held in Ethiopia, which is a testament to its role in bridging China with Africa.

Moreover, China-Africa cooperation projects are also being supported by Ethiopia, he added.

DP expects uptick in Horn trade...

service to import and export companies, the head elaborated.

According to him, the special economic zone is offering space and logistical services to business companies and relief agencies. With high infrastructure and less traffic, the company expects to see a boost in the number of investment companies in the zone.

DP World officially opened in 2021 and now has plans to expand by investing in special economic zones.

The head further highlighted that the Berbera Port is a gateway to the rest of the HoA and facilitates volume trade in the region. The Berbera-Ethiopia corridor is much more conducive to easing business. “We work with the zone’s legal and customs services and ultimately give companies a shop or space in the zone.”

In 2016, Ethiopia was awarded a 19 percent share to develop and operate Berbera Port’s container terminal.



Around 36 registered companies are now completing preliminary work in the zone, while 11 have already begun operations. Using the corridor will surely have the potential to make Ethiopia a front-runner in logistics operations.

The development of this corridor will not only meet the growing demand for

Ethiopia’s international trade but also integrate the HoA countries, Oguta added.

Noting piracy in the Red Sea and Gulf of Eden has been affecting shipments and business, he stressed the need to exert more works and cooperation to overcome such challenges.

Ethiopia amasses 3.2 bln USD...

fiscal year while domestic tourism has channeled 48.8 billion Birr to the national economy.

Presenting the nine month’s performance of the tourism sector to the Trade and Tourism Standing Committee of the House of People Representatives yesterday, Tourism Minister Nassise Chali stated that of the plan to generate 3.5 billion USD, it was able to amass 3.2 billion USD by attracting 861,126 foreign tourists.

Around 30.5 million local tourists visited different attraction sites though the plan was to lure 31.2 million.

Through the efforts that have been put towards enhancing MICE tourism, Ethiopia has organized 19 international events in nine months. The country also took part in six international trade fairs that were hosted in the UK, Germany, Belgium, France, Pakistan and India which is said to be instrumental in promoting its tourism potential.

Highlighting that 406,290 tourists visited the National Museum in the stated period, the Minister indicated that 152.1 million Birr was generated from park visiting, sport hunting, issuing and renewing license, and film production, among others.

Mentioning the numerous activities that have been carried out to expand local and international investment, Nassise noted her ministry has prepared a national tourism investment profile as well as a tourism investment promotion document and distributed to domestic and international stakeholders.

To this end, 91 new investors have been engaged in the tourism sector while around 63 investments that had been on the pipeline have become operational in this year. Some 1,016 new guesthouses have also been open to service.

“By undertaking several digital promotion activities, the Ministry has increased its online penetration by 45%. It is

also promoting and delivering tourism information using social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Telegram.”

Also, the Ministry has executed valuable activities including building tourist information centers, putting landmarks, towers and informative symbols on tourist destinations including preparing restrooms nearby.

“Of the plan to create 105,000 jobs, about 81,673 jobs were created from which 30,968 are permanent. The aforesaid employment opportunities were created in hotels, tour operators and guides, tourism technology and digitalization, event organization, among others.”

She also noted that to minimize the threats on reserved tourist areas, efforts have been geared towards providing alternative livelihoods for citizens. Thus, around 29,295 citizens have benefitted through eco-tourism, agriculture, provision of renewable

energy, small enterprises, and sustainable natural resources.

With regard to development of new and already existing tourist destinations, the Minister stressed that the PM Abiy Ahmed (PhD) initiatives such as ‘Gebeta’ projects have played a significant role in enhancing Ethiopia’s international competitiveness and creating more jobs.

Nassise also highlighted the ongoing renewal and infrastructural development projects in Jimma Aba Jifar, Senkele Swayne’s Hartebeest Sanctuary (SSHS) and Rock-Hewn Churches of Lalibela.

Commending the best performance in the report, members of the Standing Committee emphasized the need to engage the private sector in the tourism business, adding value to tourist destination developments, properly utilizing tourism potential as well as creating more jobs in the sector.

Opinion

Port services crucial to facilitate international trade

BY GETACHEW MINAS

Port services are very crucial for international trade related to exports from and import into Ethiopia, excluding arms sales. Being a landlocked country, it relies heavily on ports in neighboring countries for its international trade. The efficiency of these ports is critical for facilitating the smooth flow of imports and exports. Efficiency and effectiveness of these ports reduces costs thereby enhancing the overall competitiveness of the Ethiopian economy.

Maladministration and inefficient port services raise the cost of transporting agricultural products which are the major components of exports from the country. Delays in the delivery of these export items may lead to disruption of trade between the country and the importing countries. The overall result is loss of income in foreign exchange and of reliability in trade relations with trading partners or importing countries. The loss of income would be directly felt by domestic producers and traders as well as the local financing institutions. Revenues derived by the government from agricultural exports would also be proportionally reduced.

It may be useful to have a general picture of the key ports used by Ethiopia. These would help to have some assessment of the challenges faced and opportunities for improvement. Before delving into these issues of trade, it may be useful to have an overall picture of the key ports Ethiopia currently uses for import and export. One of the major ports used is the Port of Djibouti. It is the primary gateway, which handles a large segment of the international trade of the country. It is a vital hub for trade routes because of its strategic location on the Red Sea. It is a major trade route connecting Africa, the Middle East, and Asia.

The port has a modern infrastructure, featuring up to date and recent container terminals. It provides bulk cargo facilities and free trade zone that support modern and efficient cargo handling and storage. There is a railway connectivity which immensely enhances the Addis Ababa-Djibouti Railway services. Its efficient service reduced transportation time and costs for goods moving between Ethiopia and Djibouti.

The port of Berbera (Somaliland) is being developed as an emerging alternative. It is a route for Ethiopian export and import trading. It particularly serves goods destined for northern and eastern parts of the country. Significant investments are being made for the expansion and modernization of the port facilities. These

include the construction and development of a new container terminal. It also has an improved road network and connectivity to Ethiopia.

Similarly, the port of Mombasa (Kenya) is an option that serves as an additional and complementary option for Ethiopian trade. This port serves for transporting goods through southern Ethiopia. Also, there is an ongoing development of infrastructure projects, such as the Lamu Port in South Sudan-Ethiopia Transport (LAPSSET) corridor. It is designed to enhance connectivity between neighboring countries. It facilitates trade between Ethiopia and Kenya. The ports located in the neighboring countries of Ethiopia are crucial for facilitating its external trade.

Though critical for trade, these ports have several challenges in the delivery of their services to Ethiopia. One of these challenges is dependency on neighboring ports. Its reliance on ports of the neighboring countries renders it vulnerable and susceptible to geopolitical tensions. It may be affected by policy changes of the neighboring countries. The open and hidden tensions between these countries may cause logistical disruptions. These lead to unexpected fluctuation of transport costs and variations in the value of exports or imports. The causes for these distortions may originate from any of the countries that manage port services.

Usually, a country that depends on the ports of neighboring countries has only limited negotiation power. In particular, its dependence on a single primary port can limit the bargaining power of Ethiopia. It has limited options in bargaining port fees. It may be subjected to poor quality of port services for which it is charged high fees. Yet, it has no alternative except behaving as a price-taker.

A critical challenge Ethiopia faces is related to logistics and transport infrastructure. Inadequate road and rail infrastructure within the country may lead to delays in delivery of goods. This causes unexpected rise in the cost of transportation, which has to be reflected in the high price of goods. These situations reveal the need to improve the efficiency of connectivity between ports and inland destinations. Inefficiency of such connectivity leads to imported inflation.

Importers have to cover additional costs only through marking up prices of imported goods. Of course, such burdens are transmitted to the final consumers through the instrumentality of trading enterprises. These traders also mark up the profit margin hidden in the consumer prices. The

high margin of profit is inbuilt in the cost of trading. Thus, the real cost of a product, including inefficient transportation, is imbedded in the final sales price of goods for which consumers pay. This takes place irrespective of the efficiency of port services.

Another burden on the final consumer is related to inefficient customs and border procedures. This can cause delays in the movement of goods leading to rising cost of services. This has negative impact on the efficiency of trade. Of course, inefficiency gives birth to a cycle of rising costs. It may be caused by unskilled persons engaged in the process of the movement of goods and services.

Inefficiency creates innumerable problems of service delivery at the ports. Added to this human factor is low capacity and congestion of ports. Port congestion is caused by high volumes of traffic at major ports like Djibouti. It can lead to jamming and blocking, affecting the timely handling and clearance of goods. Similarly, limited capacity and constraints in storage have caused high inefficiency in port services. Inefficiency in the handling of equipment by unqualified workforce at ports can hinder efficient operations and delay delivery of goods. All the above mentioned problems related to port services have to be resolved in time before they become insoluble.

Though port services are full of problems, there are opportunities for resolving them. There is, however, a need to take strategic initiatives as indicated herewith. The development of infrastructure is an important strategic initiative for improving port services. This, however, requires the existence and development of transport corridors. Developing and upgrading transport corridors may improve the efficiency of connectivity and reduce unnecessary transportation costs. This may be a precondition for establishing logistics centers and “dry ports” within the hinterland in Ethiopia. This may facilitate efficient and effective movement of goods and storage facilities.

Apart from being cost-effective, it reduces dependency on coastal ports of other countries that design and redesign the coastal operations to their advantages only. In this situation, Ethiopia falls under the mercy of neighboring countries that own, manage and control coastal operations and activities. Such operations may not take the interests of countries that depend on these ports. Diversification of port services may help Ethiopia to have other options.

Diversification of port access that leads to multiple port options is the duty of

concerned Ethiopian authorities. They may have to explore and develop alternative use of ports, including Berbera and Mombasa. These ports may reduce dependency on a single port monopoly. This enhances trade and other operational resilience of the user country. This act should be buttressed with regional cooperation. In this regard, strengthening regional support and collaboration is of the essence.

Concerned countries may enter agreements which may lead to the access of alternative ports. These agreements may also foster collaborative infrastructure development from the ports to the hinterland. This may connect the sea ports with the dry ports, resulting in cost-effectiveness. These operations should, however, be supported with trade facilitating reforms, including customs modernization. These measures lead to the implementation of customs innovation and upgrading initiatives, such as electronic customs systems. These acts may be supported and streamlined with new procedures.

New and modern techs handled by skilled personnel may expedite the clearance of goods and reduce delays at the ports. In this respect, developing single window systems for trade documentation and processing can enhance efficiency. These systems introduce and enhance transparency in trade transactions. Such systems encourage new investments in port facilities and expansion projects. Investing in the expansion and modernization of port facilities in neighboring countries can increase capacity and improve service quality. This would encourage public-private partnerships for port development and management. This results in the leverage of private sector expertise and investment with the public ones.

In conclusion, improving port services and trade logistics is essential for the economic growth and integration of Ethiopia into global markets. It is reported that resolving logistical challenges, investing in infrastructure, and diversifying port access, Ethiopia can enhance its trade efficiency and resilience. In this respect, collaboration with neighboring countries and international partners is critical for achieving the goals of improving “port services” for sustainable economic development of the country.

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

Editorial

Remarkable growth amid challenges

The Ethiopian government has set a target to achieve a 7.9-percent economic growth in the current 2023/2024 Ethiopian fiscal year. Likewise, last October, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) had also projected the nation's economy to grow by more than six percent by the end of 2024.

Currently, the country is on the right direction to successfully realize its projected target and attain a 7.9-percent economic growth in the stated year. Evidently, the economic performance registered by different sectors in the past nine months also indicates that Ethiopia is on the right path to meet its set target.

Briefing the media last Monday regarding the overall economic performance of the country over the last nine months, Planning and Development Minister Fitsum Assefa (PhD) also stated the fact that the performance of major economic sectors is likely to achieve success in the aforementioned fiscal year.

As the Minister noted, the promising success recorded in the agriculture, industry and service sectors clearly specified that the 7.9 percent economic growth goal that was projected to be achieved in the fiscal year will be realized.

For instance, the agricultural sector has seen a 100-million quintals production increase, compared to the same period of the previous fiscal year. Accordingly, the implementation of 'Yelemat Tirufat' program which the country has embarked on to boosting productivity, production of dairy, eggs, chicken, honey and related products as well as ensuring nutritional opulence at the family and national levels, recorded concrete results and contributed substantially to achieving the performance.

Likewise, the role of the manufacturing, tourism, transport, service and other sectors over and above digitalizing the economy have been huge in terms of improving the performance.

Not only that, the peace agreement signed in Pretoria, South Africa, has also helped the country to register promising economic growth. By leading it to be in a state of normalcy, it has enabled it to divert its full attention to the economy. As a result, the sectors which had been impacted unfavorably such as agriculture, service, manufacturing, tourism, and others have revitalized and can register encouraging results.

What is more, the homegrown economic development plan coupled with "the multi-sectoral growth approach, that the country is pursuing have brought about tangible results in promoting economic growth and creating jobs for citizens. Mainly, the multi-sectoral growth approach, by unlocking the untapped potential of various sectors, diversifying sources of economic growth and enhancing cross-sectoral cooperation across different sectors, is now bearing fruit.

However, this economic growth has been registered in the midst of a number of internal and external challenges. Just to mention, but a few, inflation, shortage of foreign exchange, as well as the unpredictable effects of climate change, including periodic drought and flood are slowing down its economic development.

However, despite all the challenges it has faced, Ethiopia has been investing to advance its economic development. Consequently, owing to the government's perseverance and hard work, these days, the country's economy is growing at a remarkable pace. And as usual, Ethiopia, by addressing all the challenges and overcoming the biggest hindrances that limit its pace to growth, will sustain its overall development and herald its prosperity.

Opinion

National Dialogue paves the way for National consensus

BY GIRMACHEW GASHAW

Being able to engage in dialogue with others is an important tool for peacefully resolving conflicts at every level: political, societal, and personal. The ability to interact respectfully with other people despite differences in backgrounds, beliefs, and opinions is essential for peaceful coexistence.

Dialogue is a key to promoting inclusivity, engaging women, youth, marginalized groups, and anyone that is normally not at the centre of peace negotiations. The aim of dialogue is to engage diverse and divided communities in a constructive conversation in order to break down stereotypes and rebuild trust.

Conducting National Dialogue is a new phenomenon for Ethiopia. Though it is a fundamental issue for a given country so as to ensure peace and prosperity, unfortunately, the country had been revolving in the vicious cycle of poverty and backwardness due to the absence of national dialogue. When there is a regime change, officials come up with certain thoughts and wage struggle for the realization of their dreams without consulting others. Without taking the lesson from preceding one, the next regime that comes to power attempt to start a new project just from the scratch. Our past trajectories were full of such patterns.

National dialogue is now a prime attention of the government of Ethiopia. Indeed, there is nothing better than that for the east African country these days. Since day one of Prime Minister Abiy (Ph.D), the government officials have traveled to every corner of the country and talked people who represent the society on various political, economic and social affairs of the country. Recognizing age-long ideological differences within the society, the government has come up with the idea of consultation.

In order to realize the national dialogue, the government has established a legal and independent entity called Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission. The Commission has begun a task with a vision of facilitating the dialogue process. Understanding that it is a burning issue for the country, the commission has been striving to facilitate everything possible.

The Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission has come to effect since February 23, 2022. Since then, the commission has been undertaking a number of preparatory activities including holding discussion with potential stakeholders to grasp experiences that would help to conduct successful national dialogue in the country.

The government of Ethiopia has shown its commitment through providing due support to make the ongoing task of the commissions effective. Apart from providing every- assistance, the government has made

The final goal of the dialogue is bringing national consensus among the people, and bridge the ideological differences and build common narrative

the commission free from any sort of political influence. Local and international organizations are also supporting the commission in a bid to realize its vision.

The Commission is now expected to reveal its schedule to start conducting the historic national dialogue soon. So far, it has been gathering and identifying pertinent points of talk through participating people that represent the society at large. The final goal of the dialogue is bringing national consensus among the people, and bridge the ideological differences and build common narrative.

In the national dialogue which is scheduled to be held soon, the idea of every human being should be included. If there be an idea left out during the course of the dialogue or a perception of each and every segment of the society marginalized, it will be hard as it will drag us to former situation. Thus, all segments of the society will be given equal participation and voice during the course of the national dialogue.

The national dialogue commission is meant to pave the way for national consensus and keep the integrity of the country. In order to make it a success, development partners are expected to strengthen the support provided to the commission both in cash and kind. Together we can make the dialogue fruitful. We should open for the dialogue, as it would bring us to harmony. If we properly entertain our differences, our journey to prosperity will be tangible.

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



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The Ethiopian Herald

Business & Economy

Promising move of Ethiopia's economic progress

BY BACHA ZEWDIE

With the concerted efforts of concerned bodies under the committed leadership starting from the premier, Ethiopia's economy has registered remarkable progress during the past nine months of the current fiscal year amidst myriads of challenges. Among the challenges the nation has encountered, apart from that is common globally like inflation, Ethiopia has passed through bundle of hurdles incurred from internal conflicts in its different parts especially in Amhara and Oromia regions that are potent to stagnate the developmental progress and external influences.

Defending the nation's sovereignty with one hand and carrying out the development issue on the other hand, the leadership along with the people has registered notable performances in the economic arena. According to the Ministry of Planning and Development (MoPD), the promising performances witnessed in the macro economy including agriculture, industry and service sectors showcase Ethiopia is in the right position to achieve the estimated 7.9% economic growth.

MoPD Minister, Fitsum Assefa (PhD), briefed the media a couple of days ago about the nine-month performance of the major development sectors in terms of macro economy, infrastructure, public participation and beneficiaries as well as implementation of the reform agenda. The success exceeds the forecast of international monetary fund (IMF).

According to the IMF, 6 out of the top-10 performing economies worldwide in 2024 will be from Sub-Saharan Africa. Ethiopia is ranked 2nd in Africa with the highest GDP growth forecast in 2024 at 6.2% after Ivory Coast at 6.6 %, CNBC (Consumer News and Business Channel) American business news channel owned by NBC Universal News Group reported based on an interview it made with Zemedeneh Negatu, Global Chairman at Fairfax Africa Fund.

Zemedeneh highlighted the remarkable resilience of the Ethiopian economy, despite facing various challenges such as the impact of COVID-19 and internal conflicts.

As of the Minister of Planning and Development, the economic progress registered so far indicates the country's economic growth surpasses what the IMF estimated by 1.3% growth. The promising performance in the macro economy is a clear indication for Ethiopia's capability to register the estimated annual economic growth.

"In the agriculture sector for instance, the current performance exceeded that of last year's same period by 100 million quintals of crop. Of the 100 million quintals, summer wheat production covers around 80 million while rice production has been registered to be 38 million quintals," the Minister detailed.

As to the observation of Zemedeneh, Ethiopia's economy has shown resilience



Fitsum Assefa (PhD)

not only the COVID-19 impact and internal conflicts, but also the consequences of Russia and Ukraine war that adversely impacted the international community in one or another way.

Regarding drivers of the growth, as of Zemedeneh, even though its macro economy is migrating to industrialization, it is still heavily dependent on agriculture so the performance in agriculture sector will drive the growth. The other sectors like service, investment and even the manufacturing that faces challenges have shown progress. They are also drivers of the economic growth.

Sadly, according to Zemedeneh, inflation has seriously challenged the nation's economy for the last fifteen to seventeen years despite the effort of the National Bank to bring it down.

Fitsum (PhD) further explained that various economic initiatives have contributed for the economic progress. Under the 'Ye Lemat Tirufat' initiative, for instance, it was able to produce two billion liters of milk, 1.4 billion of eggs, 200,000 tons of meat as well as 110,000 tons of honey.

Launched by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD), "Ye Lemat Tirufat" development campaign, which focuses on nutritional opulence in Arba Minch in November, 2022 aims to boost productivity and production of dairy, eggs, chicken, and honey and related products as well as intensify efforts to achieve food self-sufficiency and ensure nutritional opulence at the family and national levels. The program contributes for job creations, increasing exports, and hastening import substitution.

Mentioning that promising results have been registered in the service and transport sectors, Fitsum (PhD) highlighted that the production capacity of industries has seen significantly improved and reached 56% on average in six months alone.

According to Market Overview, agriculture

has historically been the driver of the Ethiopian economy but recently the service sector has grown to become the largest contributor to GDP. According to the National Bank of Ethiopia (NBE), services, agriculture, and industry accounted for 40%, 32%, and 29% of GDP respectively, as of the report of a couple of years back. Construction of industrial parks aiming to attract Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and help create employment through the creation of vast jobs will change the manufacturing industry's performance and it will take over the rest and lead the nation's economy.

During the Minister's media brief, it was also mentioned that over four trillion Birr transactions were made through digital payment in the reported period whereas digital loan provision for SMEs and other small businesses was said to be three billion Birr. Also, the digital micro savings was four billion Birr.

NBE Governor Mamo Mihretu said that in 2021, Ethiopia embarked on an audacious journey with the launch of its National Digital Payments Strategy (NDPS). This initiative was more than a policy reform; it was a bold stride towards reshaping the country's economic landscape into one that is more inclusive, efficient, and prosperous.

"As we edge closer to the culmination of the first phase of the strategy's implementation in 2024, it is crucial to take stock of the ground we've covered, the hurdles we've overcome, and the significant strides we've made towards a digital-first financial ecosystem," he stated.

Spearheaded by the National Bank of Ethiopia (NBE), with the support of the United Nations-based better than Cash Alliance, the strategy is steering the nation towards a less cash-dependent economy. From the get-go, Ethiopia's payment landscape, vast and intricate, presented numerous challenges in the transition to a more digital ecosystem. These challenges included infrastructure

deficits, digital literacy gaps, regulatory hurdles, and a growing financial inclusion gender gap. However, the determination to drive greater efficiency in payment service delivery, transparency, women's economic participation and sustained inclusive growth by leveraging responsible digital payments is paving the way for a financial revolution, the governor added.

Regarding job creation, according to Fitsum (PhD), over 2.1 million citizens were employed over the past nine months of the current fiscal year domestically. Nonetheless, the performance is unsatisfactory due to the increasing number of job seekers. On the other hand, 278,198 citizens obtained jobs abroad.

According to the World Bank in Ethiopia, its rapidly growing young population (60% of Ethiopians are under 30) presents a significant employment challenge. Each year, 2 million new job seekers enter the market, creating a quandary for the government—how to meet this enormous demand for employment. Over the past years, the Government of Ethiopia (GoE) has set up several industrial parks to encourage foreign direct investment into the manufacturing sector with the goal being to attract investments, create jobs, boost foreign exchange earnings, promote sustainable manufacturing, establish linkages, and facilitate technology transfer.

The Minister further highlighted that the government's revenue in the reported period was 374 billion Birr which showed 15% increase from last year whereas the Federal expenditure was to be 495 billion Birr. Capital expenditure takes the lion's share by recording 15.5% increment from the previous year.

As to her, Ethiopia has generated over 2.5 billion USD from goods' export, while it has obtained 5.8 billion USD from the service sector and 275 million USD from gold export. Similarly, the country has collected 264 million USD from oil seeds. Additional 2.8 billion USD was gained from Foreign Direct Investment (FDI).

About the financial sector's performance, Fitsum (PhD) emphasized that the bank's total savings has reached 2.4 trillion Birr whereas the manufacturing sector is the leading recipient of the banks' loan and has 37.4% share followed by agriculture 22%.

Though the inflation rate was reduced to 23.3%, food inflation is still 27% and remains to be the major challenge of Ethiopia's economy.

She said the performance of Abbay Dam, corridor development; 'Gebeta' projects as well as digital infrastructure are encouraging. Private sector and public participation on human-centered projects as well as different government initiatives is also said to be satisfactory.

Despite promising results, efforts need to be geared towards increasing investment, creating more jobs and arresting inflation, the Minister emphasized.

Art & Culture

Making cake - edible art

(Cake making is a far cry from a cakewalk)

BY ALEM HAILU G/KRISTOS

“While kids, whenever we got money my siblings and I rushed to a nearby pastry to buy delicacies, among which Donut cake was our favorite. Often, we did not wait till we got back home. We gormandized the cakes en route to our village wondering one another’s appetite for such edible art pieces till our sides’ splat with laughter. We and children in the neighborhood also eagerly waited for birthday feasts which mainly comprised bakery products,” Frehiwot Yehune a cake maker hailing from kazanchis reminisced reverting two decades.

Amused she added, “Little did I know then that I would evolve from a cake fan to a cake baker!”

She responded so when this journalist by chance met her and interviewed her about the broad array of fascinating cakes she paraded for her niece’s birthday showcasing that cake baking is indeed a higher form of art.

“While devouring cakes in our childhood days, as may be the case with cake fans, it didn’t occur to me the sweet toil crafting and baking cakes entails including the long hours one has to stand. Nor did I have an inkling it could be brain-racking in the effort to come up with one’s fingerprint or raise the scale of set standards. Sometimes clients ask you to design the cake as per their interest. Rising to such challenge is very much demanding,” she said.

She noted a cake-lover, unconsciously, she was internalizing the demanding skill of the cake-making art, a subset of the culinary one, presupposes.

“You see, the task of choosing the right ingredients in the right proportion and creating the right mix that best fits most of our sensory organs beg for a passion, long-practice-honed skill, and apprenticeship under born pastry chefs.”

Elaborating on the art borrowing from the first-hand knowledge and training she acquired, Frehiwot has this to say, “A cake has to be eye candy opening the door to our souls, aromatic awakening our olfactory nerves to the extent of whetting our appetite, comfy having a texture that is delicate to our tactile nerves and toothsome to garner the epithet mouthwatering.”

As to her, the art of making cake requires designs that set as a requisite knowledge about shapes and colors and also how to combine the two to come up with edible artistic pieces. Experimenting with the ingredients of a recipe in line with the science to come up with creative pieces is advisable to stick out in red-hot market competitions. “Nowadays, every pastry tries to come up with a special cake exclusively of its allowing room for competition.”

After completing high school, for a while, Frehiwot became idle. But after the support and encouragement of her parents and friends, she took culinary training at Capital



In making a cake one has to be imperfectly perfect. A slight folly could cost you a lot

Hotel to make a chef out of herself. Soon her interest drifted to cake making.

At the concluding part of six-month training and eight-month apprenticeship in cake making, an interest arose in her to go for the task. Imbibing the science, developing a nimble hand, and focusing on perfectionism she graduated with a certificate as a fully-fledged cake maker.

As the saying goes “skill comes with practice or success comes with a little pain,” she began to entertain confidence to navigate the challenges the profession has in store for her. “I owe a gratitude to my instructors or more precisely my mentors, staffers, and owners of the training center, which renders on the job-training, for helping me to tune to my calling and tolerating me when I erred at the expense of ingredients as well as utensils and thumped me up when my attempts of making a sought-after cake, turned out a hit. Later, when I joined the cake-making job the positive feedback I often basked under fueled my passion to keep going. What is heartening is at different pastries I worked in I did receive appreciations even from those that had a big name.”

“Beholden of my talent, many advise me to open up my pastry. I have a plan to that effect though that seems bleak due to financial constraints. God willing in the future if I get such a chance, I could unleash my potential

to the full.”

She is also of the opinion that, as part of the social responsibility, cakes must also be produced for diabetic people bringing into play products composed of say Teff, oats, chickpeas, lentils, grapefruits, sweet potato, and the like recommended by physicians and nutritionists for diabetic visitors of pastries or bakeries. Owners of pastries ought to be sensitized about such issues. “Catering to the demand of clients receiving feedback is sagacious.”

“In meeting places, where we parade delicacies, I have observed diabetic people asking for such a cake in vain. If this problem is accorded due attention, it is not hard to tackle.”

“It sure is good TV channels conduct competition among emerging cake makers by way of promoting this creative art now getting off the ground following some foreigners—Syrians and Yeminis— joining the profession.”

Also, if as part of the import substitution task, local manufacturing industries or small-scale enterprises come up with the necessary gadgets, such as whisks of different sizes, they could be of immense assistance to young and emerging pastry chefs trying to find a niche. But the gadgets must be calibrated mindful of precision. Controlling

the temperature the cake requires in the caking-making process is a salient task. What is more, if ingredients are produced locally in the right quality cake baking could be a lucrative business here.”

Dilating on the issue, Frehiwot pointed out that as people placate their hunger fast shortly when they take a cake with either milk or tea cakes are replacing heavy lunches. As such there is a huge perspective for cakes. As cakes are relatively affordable in the face of inflation the demand for them is increasing.

Relating to how the cake-making industry could absorb many trainable youngsters intent on job creation she noted “If credit and saving associations support aspiring youngsters, who in a group or individually, want to stand on their feet taking the cake baking training, the gesture could go a long way in curbing unemployment.”

Maintaining the right weight and temperature of ingredients in a recipe is the focal task in cake baking. Ensuring that is the right task. Baking cake is a far cry from baking bread. In making a cake one has to be imperfectly perfect. A slight folly could cost you a lot.

While baking cakes hygiene must take center stage. Preserving pastry products also obligates care, especially for children. “If we forget electric blackouts could affect soft cakes the outcome could be disastrous.”

Global Affairs

Ocean Action on Global Agenda as Negotiations to Save Biodiversity Deepen

The oceans are as fascinating as they are mysterious. Home to the largest animals to ever live on Earth and billions of the tiniest, the top 100 meters of the open oceans host the majority of sea life such as fish, turtles, and marine mammals. But there is another world far below the surface. In the belly of the ocean, there are seamounts—underwater mountains that rise 1,000 meters or more from the seafloor.

It is within this context that negotiations on critical science, technical skills, and technology deepened on the second day of the 26th session of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical, and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). Putting ocean action on the global agenda is a top priority to ensure conservation and sustainable use of marine and coastal biodiversity emphasizing an urgent need for further work on ecologically or biologically significant marine areas.

“The survival of humanity is interlinked with the sustainable use of ocean and marine biodiversity resources. We rely on the ocean for food, relaxation, and inspiration. But now the ocean is under threat, and that threat is being passed on to our lives on land. We have to invest time, money, and every resource possible to save our oceans and, by doing so, save ourselves. Our biggest revenue comes from fisheries, and now we have to worry about rising sea level as we are a low-lying island,” Eleala Avantele from the Forest Peoples Program in Tuvalu told IPS.

Scientists warn that Tuvalu, the fourth-smallest country in the world, is sinking due to its vulnerability to rising sea levels, as the nation comprises nine low-lying coral atolls and islands. Across the globe, the world is in a crisis as oceans provide 50 percent of all oxygen on Earth and 50 to 80 percent of all life on Earth. This life is now at stake.

Thus far, the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, also known as the Biodiversity Plan, has been front and centre during ongoing negotiations, as it is a strategic plan for the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), a global agreement that covers all aspects of biological diversity and is considered a framework for governments and the whole of society.

Harrison Ajebe Nnoko Ngaaje from Ajemalebu Self Help (Ajesh) in Cameroon told IPS that his organization is a CSO registered in Cameroon, Ghana, Tanzania, and the USA to create synergies and collaboration within and beyond the continent for the restoration, protection, and sustainable management of key biodiversity areas.

“Conservation and sustainable use of marine and coastal biodiversity is very critical to Cameroon due to its vast and unique ecosystem and biodiversity. Limbe Beach, for instance, has shiny black sandy beaches made of lava sand from the Mt.



Delegates say the survival of humanity is interlinked with the sustainable use of ocean and marine biodiversity resources. Credit: Joyce Chimbi/IPS

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**Young people
 will need to
 understand the
 science, technical
 skills, and technology
 at play in saving our
 planet, for soon we
 will need to step in
 and step up**

Cameroon eruptions, an active volcano in the south-west region of Cameroon. We have mangroves under serious threat of degradation. Ajesh is strongly focused on marine protected area management and the conservation of marine aquatic ecosystems.”

More than half of all marine species could be in danger of extinction by 2100. Nearly 60 percent of the world’s marine ecosystems have been altered or handled unsustainably. Marine, coastal, and island biodiversity were discussed within the context of the Biodiversity Plan. Target 3 of the Plan aims to ensure and enable that by 2030 at least 30 percent of terrestrial and inland water

areas, and of marine and coastal areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services, are effectively conserved and managed.

The main goal of the SBSTTA discussions was to find and fix areas that need more attention under the Convention in order to help carry out the Biodiversity Plan for marine, coastal, and island biodiversity.

Despite the Conference of the Parties adopting the program of work on marine and coastal biological diversity at its fourth meeting in 1998 and the program of work on island biodiversity in 2006, the world is significantly behind schedule when it comes to the conservation and sustainable use of marine and coastal biodiversity. Nevertheless, CBD continues to prioritize and facilitate cooperation and collaboration with relevant global and regional organizations and initiatives with regard to marine and coastal biodiversity.

“It is very important that civil society, youths, and Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs) are part of the SBSTTA process, observing and being allowed the opportunity to make remarks. Parties make decisions but these actors also implement and are at the forefront of facing the consequences of biodiversity loss,” Ngaaje says.

Onyango Adhiambo, a youth delegate from academia and research under the International University Network on Cultural and Biological Diversity, supported Ngaaje’s remarks.

“Young people will need to understand the science, technical skills, and technology at play in saving our planet, for soon we will need to step in and step up. The future, which is now at stake, belongs to us, and when called upon to intervene on what the parties agree to, we must do so efficiently,

effectively, and sustainably to save natural resources for future generations,” Adhiambo said.

Highlights from the session included recognition of the importance of science for decision-making and that there are many areas of the programs of work on marine and coastal biodiversity and on island biodiversity that have not been fully implemented and for which enhanced capacity-building and development, in particular for least developed countries and small island developing states, are needed.

The 2022 Biodiversity Plan says that we can get back on track by creating “ecologically representative, well-connected, and fairly governed systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, recognizing indigenous and traditional territories, where applicable, and integrating them into larger landscapes, seascapes, and the ocean, while ensuring that any sustainable use, where appropriate in such areas, is fully consistent with conservation outcomes, recognizing and respecting the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities, including over their traditional territories.”

Equally important is the agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity in Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction, which was adopted on June 19, 2023.

Collaboration in ocean conservation beyond national boundaries was strongly encouraged on issues such as marine genetic resources, including the fair and equitable sharing of benefits; measures such as area-based management tools, including marine protected areas; environmental impact assessments; and capacity-building and the transfer of marine technology.

(SOURCE: INTER PRESS SERVICE)

Law & Politics

Ethiopia's commitment towards implementing DDR, Pretoria accord

BY DANIEL ALEMAYEHU

After the two-year war between the federal government and the Tigray Peoples' Front (TPLF), the two parties have come to end their conflict by agreeing on the lasting peace through a permanent cessation of hostilities under an AU brokered agreement. The accord was signed on 2nd of November 2022 in Pretoria, South Africa.

The economic, political, and social foundations of the country have been tested and the nation proofed its solidarity and power to overcome any hurdle. The people have shown its solid support for the country in such defining times.

Since the agreement was made between the two actors, the Ethiopian government made crucial efforts to put the agreement in to action. It has always been showing its commitment to act upon the actions listed in the accord. Besides, responsible stakeholders are also working with the government to ensure its implementation.

On top of that, it is a fact that the conflict has pulled numerous attentions around the world as many nations and organizations wanted to get involved in the peace process. On the other hand, Ethiopia has shown its stiff stance in welcoming an AU brokered agreement only.

The government of Ethiopia, during that time, has reflected its true stand of pan Africanism by providing the chance particularly to the African Union (AU) to solve the matter through African solution. The incumbent has expressed its desire to bring the continental bloc to take part in the resolution process so that the country has reflected its demand to solve African problems with African solutions.

With all the efforts done by the current incumbent, the AU representatives, along with other stakeholders, the peace accord has been implementing in the country as all parties play their role in better ways. The government has been committed to exert all its power to make the accord to be operational so that the nation will be in great triumph regarding its economic, political, and social aspects. It is also showing its commitment to go all the way with the Pretoria Agreement.

Similarly, involved actors, at this time, are working on implementing the Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) process. The process, based on multiple documents, is a comprehensive reversal of war conditions to peace amongst belligerents and brings about peaceful conditions; enhance human security, stability, and development through transforming the role and posture of armed combatants.

According to a document from African Union, DDR is a complex and multi-faceted but highly political process that is typically, initiated following the cessation



of armed conflict. It is also linked to the broader process of Security, Sector Reform (SSR), a phenomenon that motivates for the restructuring, re-orientation, and professionalization of security related institutions to embrace transparency and democratic culture.

DDR is therefore shaped by the historical, socio-economic, geographic, cultural, and ethnical factors, the nature of the armed conflict, and the manner in which the armed conflict was concluded. In some cases, as to the document, it is the parallel introduction of transitional justice (TJ).

Talking about Africa's experience over the past three decades, as to the document, DDR programs in Africa have had mixed results. Since the early 1990s, the United Nations had been highly involved in DDR programs globally. Since 1992, of the twenty four DDR related programs that the UN got involved, 81 percent of them are in African continent. In each DDR process in Africa, as to the document, some have been innovative and remarkably successful as was in the case of Ethiopia, Eritrea, Angola, and Uganda.

To this end, the Ethiopia's government has been expressing its full support for the implementation of actions that are drawn from the peace accord. Ethiopia, indeed, benefits from the peace accord, and AU brokered agreement. The nation has also voiced its stance regarding the accord through its diplomats and government officials. In additions, the country proves its commitment through every action it performs for the realization of the accord.

Just a week ago, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia reported that Ambassador Teye Atske-Selassie, Minister of Foreign

The government of Ethiopia, during that time, has reflected its true stand of pan Africanism by providing the chance particularly to the African Union (AU) to solve the matter through African solution

Affairs of Ethiopia, received the African Union Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security, Ambassador Bankole Adoye. Ambassador Teye affirmed that the Ethiopian government has been fully committed to the implementation of the Pretoria Peace Agreement.

Commissioner Bankole commended the implementation of the Pretoria Peace Agreement. With this inline he reiterated the AU's commitment to implementing

the Ethiopian peace process, recalling that Ethiopia was the first country to benefit from the AU Peace Fund, receiving one million US dollars in support of its DDR process. In addition, he recalled that the Union has successfully deployed the full team of the AU Monitoring, Verification and Compliance Mission (AU-MVCM). He also added that the African Union will continue to support the implementation of the transitional justice policy framework in Ethiopia.

The two sides held a wide-ranging discussion on important issues of peace and security in the Horn of Africa. Ambassador Bankole noted that Ethiopia is a formidable and effective partner in the peace-making efforts in the Horn of Africa and he underscored African Union's commitment to continue strengthening its joint work with Ethiopia.

By the same token, a number of countries and organizations, including nations' representatives have been working on supporting the peace accord to come to reality. To this end, the ministry also announced that Ambassador Mesganu Arga, MoFA State Minister, met with U.S. Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa (HoA) Mike Hammer. As to the report, It was learnt that on the occasion both discussed the Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) process and the implementation of the Pretoria Peace Agreement.

The two officials underlined the need for international-level support for the DDR process and for the successful implementation of the Pretoria Peace Agreement." Amb. Mesganu, moreover, emphasized the need for renewed structural engagement between the two countries to further scale up relations.

Planet Earth

Ethiopia to endorse wetlands protection policy

BY EPHREM ANDARGACHEW

Given the significance of wetlands for the preservation of the environment on Earth, the word “wetland” refers to a wide range of habitat types that may be found all over the nation, such as grassy fens, mossy bogs, lush floodplains, freshwater or saltwater swamps, and seashore lagoons.

Since all plants, animals, and insects depend on water for survival, natural aquatic environments are crucial homes for a wide variety of species. Because of the distinct land and water features found in marshy places, wetlands in particular are home to some of the most ecologically varied animals on Earth.

They provide many more functions than only providing food and shelter for wildlife. For example, wetlands supply natural resources, store, and filter floodwater, aid in preventing erosion during storms, and create economic advantages from tourism and recreation.

Although wetlands are important to societies in a variety of ways, they are sensitive and are vulnerable to even little disturbances. According to research financed by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and the Environmental Protection Agency, wetland areas in the United States are diminishing by up to 80,000 acres every year. This demonstrates the need to make good wetland management and conservation a priority for everyone.

Wetlands therefore need careful and extensive management as wetland ecosystems must be preserved, restored, and used sustainably via careful strategy development and execution. Applying a variety of measures is also crucial, including managing invasive species, monitoring water quality, regulating land use practices, encouraging public education and awareness, and so on.

More significantly, successful wetlands management frequently requires coordination among government agencies, non-profit groups, and local communities to ensure that wetlands are preserved and maintained sustainably. This can assist in preserving the biological integrity of wetland regions, promote biodiversity, and offer important ecosystem services including flood control, water purification, and wildlife habitat.

In addition, wetlands management may include policy formulation and enforcement to protect wetland regions from detrimental activities such as pollution, drainage, and habitat degradation. Comprehensive wetlands management measures may be used to conserve these critical ecosystems for future generations.

Wetland management is important for a variety of reasons, including biodiversity protection. Wetlands are among the world’s most ecologically varied ecosystems, providing essential habitat for a wide range of plant and animal species. Effective wetlands management contributes to the protection and preservation of biodiversity, ensuring the survival of a wide range of species, including many vulnerable or



Effective wetlands management contributes to the protection and preservation of biodiversity, ensuring the survival of a wide range of species, including many vulnerable or endangered species

endangered species.

It can also serve to manage floods that include the filtration of water. To control water flow, lower the chance of floods, and enhance water quality, wetlands are essential. By filtering out pollutants and extra nutrients, proper management of wetlands can assist in enhancing water purification and lessen the effects of extreme weather events.

Wetlands play a crucial role in mitigating climate change because they store and absorb large amounts of carbon, which lowers greenhouse gas emissions. Good management can support international efforts to mitigate climate change by preserving wetlands’ ability to sequester carbon.

Furthermore, wetlands provide a variety of ecological services, including water filtering, groundwater recharge, coastal stability, and support for leisure activities like birding and nature tourism. Proper management guarantees that these vital services continue to benefit both humans and the environment.

People in different countries use wetlands for their cultural and traditional importance. Because many indigenous communities and cultures have deep connections to wetland areas, which hold spiritual, cultural, and traditional significance. Hence, sustainably managing wetlands implies the respect and preservation of these cultural values and practices.

Currently, both developed and developing countries have started using wetlands for their economic benefit. Wetlands have the potential to contribute to local economies through activities such as fishing, agriculture, and tourism. Effective management helps to ensure the long-term sustainability of these economic activities while preserving the ecological integrity of wetland ecosystems.

Taking wetland’s cultural, spiritual, economic, and environmental value into account, it is important to know the causes that affect wetlands across the world. Regardless of economic power, technological advancement, wealth, and so on, many studies indicate that various factors affect and threaten the survival of wetlands across the world.

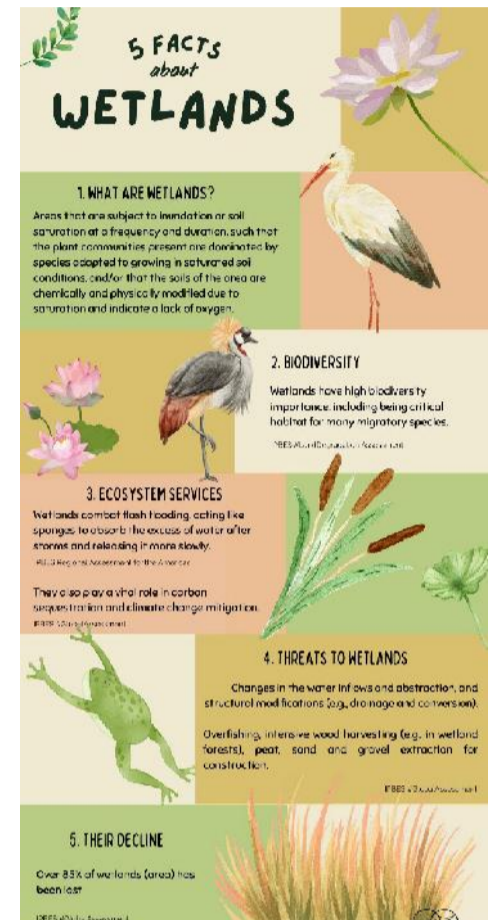
Especially, urban development and agriculture are some of the largest quantifiable causes of wetland destruction over time because they facilitate the degradation of habitats through nutrient loading and sedimentation. The construction of impervious surfaces like roads, sidewalks, and parking lots can direct nutrient-rich runoff to these delicate areas at levels that exceed nature’s ability to naturally manage.

Besides, when storm water runoff containing fertilizers, livestock waste, grass clippings, and other pollutants enters a wetland ecosystem, it can cause phosphorus pollution and other environmental imbalances that may spur nuisance algae blooms and fuel the growth of invasive plants.

Cognizant of these negative implications, Ethiopia has been trying to combat and protect wetlands from negative impacts. The protection not only implements protection methods but also include policy preparation.

The Ethiopian Environmental Protection Authority (EEPA) Water Bodies and Wetlands Management, Monitoring, and Control Desk Head Zerihun Mengesha said that EEPA is developing a policy and proclamation that ensures proper protection and utilization of wetlands in Ethiopia.

Wetlands, including lakes, rivers, and springs play a crucial role in regulating water resources and maintaining the ecological balance of the environment. However, researchers in the sector have been revealing growing concerns



about the impact of farming, grazing, and other activities on the country’s wetlands.

Especially, experts in the field have repeatedly called for a robust legal framework to safeguard wetlands from threats and implement sustainable management practices. Hence, preparing a policy is important to guarantor water resource development and sustainability.

He added that preparing a policy and protecting wetlands play a vital role not only protect domestic water supplies but also the flow of transboundary rivers. “Wetlands are the kidneys of earth,” Zerihun said, underscoring the need for comprehensive legal frameworks that manage and govern the ecosystems.

Accordingly, the EEPA is currently drafting a policy and decree to address the management and regulation of wetlands. These legal frameworks are expected to help prevent pollution and degradation of water bodies caused by the depletion and damage of wetlands and the broader ecosystem.

He also pointed out that Ethiopia’s efforts in environmental protection and development, including the Green Legacy initiative, will play a significant role in safeguarding wetlands and ensuring the sustainable flow of trans-boundary rivers. Furthermore, Zerihun emphasized that regional cooperation and support will be crucial for the sustainable development of watersheds and the protection of water resources as Ethiopia is a source of water for neighboring countries.

Ethiopia’s wetlands management is generally crucial to preserving the nation’s biodiversity, ecological health, and socioeconomic stability. Ethiopia can ensure that present and future generations continue to benefit from wetlands by making sustainable wetlands management techniques a priority.