



# The Ethiopian Herald

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## Ethiopia ramps up investment promotion for auspicious FDI flow

BY YESUF ENDRIS

**ADDIS ABABA-** The government's active engagement in investment promotion and related activities are entitled to the increasing flow of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), the Ethiopian Investment Commission (EIC) said.

EIC Commissioner Hana Aryasellassie told the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that the government's involvement in promoting investment opportunities through business forums and diplomatic missions is instrumental to Ethiopia experiencing significant growth in the FDI inflow. "This year alone, eight business forums with foreign investors have been conducted. We plan to organize an additional two or three in the coming months."

The Commissioner further highlighted that foreign investors in industrial parks have created substantial jobs. The total job creation in these parks has reached 75,000, which is a considerable contribution to the employment sector.

See Ethiopia ... page 3



## TJ process enters roadmap crafting phase: MoJ

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

**ADDIS ABABA** – Ethiopia's Transitional Justice (TJ) process has been transformed into roadmap crafting phase, the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) announced.

Approached by the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) MoJ National Human Rights Action Plan Office Head Awel Sultan said that the transitional justice process has entered roadmap preparation phase to direct the implementation.

The roadmap is expected to be finalized within two weeks so that it would facilitate the outlining of specific processes, timelines, task assignment, and budgetary requirements for carrying out the policy's directives, the Head added.

See TJ process ... page 3

## Inclusive engagement pivotal to Nat'l Dialogue: Senior citizens

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

**ADDIS ABABA** - Citizens should put aside their differences and prioritize the National Dialogue, so said elderly persons

As Ethiopia is struggling to solve its multifarious problems through the National Dialogue, government, institutions and individuals are expected to play their role to realize this common agenda.

Elderly Father, Prof. Ahmed Zekari told the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that since the National Dialogue determines the future of the country, all Ethiopians shall give priority to holding an effective national consultation.

Elderly persons are making active participation since the establishment, he said, adding that enabling activities are being carried out for the dialogue.

"Since the National Dialogue is the concern of every Ethiopian, each individual need to play significant role in identifying the major challenges that lay in the country. Everyone is also encouraged to provide agenda for the commission."

See Inclusive engagement ... page 3



Prof. Ahmed Zekari

## Experts underscore Pretoria Accord's exemplary status

BY BETELEHEM BEDLU

**ADDIS ABABA** - The Pretoria Agreement could be an exemplary act to many African countries and give them the lesson to resolve their differences without third parties' interference, political experts said.

Speaking to the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) Addis Ababa University Political Science Lecturer Shimelis Hailu stated that the Pretoria accord not only curtailed the damage that had been posed on the livelihoods of civilians, but also it tackled the immense damage that had been posed in strategic infrastructure.

"Ethiopia's ability to cease hostilities could be taken as a huge lesson for Africa as well as for the rest of the world. History has taught us that it took many years to reach an agreement for many countries in similar fashion as they failed to build trust on the outcomes."

Also, the terror used to emerge from the fear of unwarranted interference of external actors with ill intentions. Thus, most unrest

See Experts underscore ... page 3



Shimelis Hailu



Aregawi Berehe (PhD)

# News

## Bolstering collaboration to ensure child right: *MoWSA*

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

**ADDIS ABABA** – Stakeholders meaningful collaboration is critical to strengthen child right protection and welfare, said the Ministry of Women and Social Affairs (MoWSA).

Approached by *The Ethiopian Herald*, the Ministry of Women and Social Affairs (MoWSA) Child Protection Chief Executive Officer Zebidar Bogale said that the collaboration of stakeholders is critical for the protection of child right and well-being.

Child right protection and welfare requires a special attention mainly for those vulnerable ones, she said, adding that providing family, social and institutional supports is a responsibility of all to protect children from any kind of right violation by overcoming social and economic challenges.

Although the government and partners have been performing a wide range of activities, there are remaining tasks in ensuring child right protection and welfare as the children are still facing child labor, gender-based violence, child trafficking and others challenges, she noted.

According to the Officer, some partners have been involving in children right protection and lives improvement activities. Contrarily, some of them have different level of limitations so that MoWSA has been applying evaluation and monitoring mechanism to fill performance gaps and others.

To realize change in the sector, it demands further collaboration and partnership of all stakeholders as well as strengthening concerted efforts, she stated.

She also urged all stakeholders to show commitment as protecting children from any kinds of abuse especially overcoming their social and economic problems demands the involvement of all parties.

This could contribute to implement international and continental child protection agreements, she said.

Furthermore, engagement of stakeholders in all planning, monitoring, and reporting activities is vital to facilitate the task and utilize as policy input. So far, the country has been carrying out various activities to safeguard child right protection and welfare, Zebidar added.

## Unlocking indigenous knowledge crucial to tourism dev't: *Experts*

BY MESERET BEHAILU

**ADDIS ABABA** – Experts suggested effective utilization of indigenous knowledge to realize sustainable tourism development and build country's positive image.

Misrak Polytechnic College Business and Finance Trainer, Tewodros Beyene told *The Ethiopian Herald* that Ethiopia has diverse cuisines and rich culture though lack of attention for indigenous knowledge restricted the nation benefiting from these resources.

As to him, indigenous knowledge needs to be supported by research to bring significant outcome in the tourism industry.

There are existing 49 food preparation unit of competence in Ethiopia, he said, adding that merely three or 6% of them give attention to indigenous knowledge.

He further stated that trainers, educational institutes, and Ministry of Labor and Skills (MoLS) should take the prime responsibility to apply indigenous knowledge in tourism to ensure sector's growth.

He expressed that researches are being conducted at policy level to bridge gaps between the indigenous knowledge and tourism industry.

Tourism Training Institute Deputy Director General, Yitaseb Seyum on his part said



that working on indigenous knowledge in collaboration with MoLS and Technical and Vocational Education, and Training (TVET) institutes is vital to develop tourism industry and solving the skilled human power limitation in the area.

Yitaseb noted that his institute is providing capacity building training, conducting research and investigation, transferring knowledge and providing consultation services to advance tourism.

“Though a number of students have been graduating and seeking jobs, some hospitality services such as housekeeping and laundry

are still facing shortage of competent human resource to the position,” he noted.

He added that the Institute conducted “Human Resource Demand and Supply Analysis on Tourism” aimed at balancing the proficient human power within the smokeless industry.

Yitaseb further stated that his institute has planned to conduct research on cultural dishes in eight different states this fiscal year whilst five states were already addressed in the past nine months. As to him, Afar, Sidama, and Gambella states have been listed out in addressing cultural food preparation.

## KOICA deepening collaboration with Ethiopian institutions

**ADDIS ABABA** - The Korean International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) is strengthening its collaboration with Ethiopian institutions across various development sectors namely manufacturing, health, climate change, and agriculture, KOICA Ethiopia Deputy Country Director, Shinyoung Lee told ENA.

The deputy country director stated that the partnership between Ethiopia and the Government of South Korea is growing every year.

KOICA is supporting many development sectors in the country focusing on critical areas like manufacturing (with a particular emphasis on the leather sector and agricultural processing), health, climate change, and agriculture, he noted.

“The biggest area is the manufacturing sector and the second one is health.”

According to him, there are several modalities and approaches of support project based interventions and sectoral approach.

He stated that KOICA provides substantial financial resources, with individual project budgets ranging from 8 million USD to 10 million USD for targeted interventions in each thematic area.

“We have around like eight to ten million USD of individual projects for each thematic area,” Lee said adding that the organization's cooperation with Ethiopian institutions in



various areas is very productive.

“The partnership is growing, in terms of the budget, it has grown every year. And the partnership with all these ministries is very cooperative and very productive. So I believe that KOICA, and the government of South Korea, have grown our presence in Ethiopia and then having better relationship with government entities to provide better services and better interventions for those people.”

According to him, the modality of partnership in these thematic areas is projects.

“We have around like eight to ten million USD of individual project for each thematic area,” Lee said. “The biggest area is the

manufacturing sector and the second one is the health.”

He added: “We have several approaches. So, one is the sectoral of approach. So, we are focusing currently on the leather sector and then also agricultural processing.”

KOICA closely works with the Ministry of Labor and Skills on human power development, he said. We provide technical and infrastructure support including machineries to the Technical Education and Vocational Schools, he added.

KOICA also assist cross-cutting public institutions to facilitate manufacturing and export trade.

“So when it comes to manufacture, import and export is very important. So we are supporting those public domains, which enable import and export include, such as Ministry of Revenue, the Ethiopian customs commission, and then also the Ministry of Industry and Regional integrations, which are the main players from the government side to enable import and export. So we consider this a cross-cutting area of support.”

KOICA has also a project with the Ministry of Innovation and Technology supporting the public sector to provide better services for the startups and Small, Medium Enterprises.

KOICA established its Ethiopian office in 1995 and has steadily expanded its presence and impact in the country.

# News

## Singapore vows to strengthen bilateral, multilateral ties with Ethiopia

**ADDIS ABABA (ENA)** - President of Singapore, Tharman Shanmugaratnam has expressed his country's desire to further strengthen its bilateral and multilateral relations with Ethiopia.

Ethiopia's Ambassador Fekadu Beyene presented his Letter of Credence to the president of Singapore yesterday at a ceremony held at Istana Palace in the capital of Singapore, according to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA).

Fekadu presented his letter of credence to the president, accrediting him as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Ethiopia to Singapore with residence in Jakarta, Indonesia.

Ambassador Fekadu also paid a courtesy call on the President, where he conveyed the best wishes of President Sahlework Zewdie, and Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD), for the personal wellbeing of President Tharman Shanmugaratnam, and the welfare and prosperity of the people of the Singapore.

On the occasion, Singapore's President Tharman Shanmugaratnam wished the Ambassador success in his work to enhance the bilateral ties between the two countries.

In addition, the president expressed gratitude for the goodwill wishes of the Government and Peoples of Ethiopia, and stated that Singapore will continue to strengthen its bilateral and multilateral relations with Ethiopia, while highlighting his country's readiness to provide him with the required support in discharging



his duties.

On his part, Ambassador Fekadu expressed his desire to strengthen the existing bilateral relations between the two countries and also thanked the Government of Singapore for the long-standing multifaceted relations.

Moreover, he reiterated the firm commitment of the Government of Ethiopia to further strengthen both bilateral and multilateral relations with the Government of the Republic of Singapore.

Fekadu further thanked the President, and indicated the great opportunities that exist in Ethiopia with its reform agenda, the ministry

of foreign affairs added.

Ethiopia being the gateway to Africa, and the Ethiopian Airlines connecting Addis Ababa with the rest of the world, including Singapore with its 5 times flights per week were discussed as enablers for much closer collaboration between the two nations' business communities.

The impressive results in dry season irrigated and cluster farming practices of small holder farms, and the green legacy initiative, the eco-tourism potentials, special economic zone, manufacturing industries and IT were discussed.

## Inclusive ...

Last year, IGAD has organized eminent personalities council with the aim of African Solutions to African Problems. The council is vital to undertake discussions, experience sharing and knowledge transfer activities among the member states, as to the Professor.

Abba Geda Teshome Bekele on his part mentioned that the National Dialogue could serve nation as a springboard to bright future. Thus, all Ethiopian across the nation must engage.

The National Dialogue helps to ensure national consensus and build strong and peaceful nation. What the commission has been undertaking so far is promising in this regard, he added.

By seizing this process as golden opportunity, he stressed that equal effort need to be put in formulating projects that allows nation register all-rounded development.

Abba Geda Teshome further emphasized that the dialogue should embrace major developmental projects while capitalizing on common interests to resolve differences using nation's indigenous knowledge.

Hence, elderly persons, religious leaders, government bodies, and all concerned actors need to play crucial role for the success of the National Dialogue. Moreover, priority needs to be given to make the process smooth and peaceful, as to him.

## Ethiopia ramps up investment ...

EIC remains engaged in continuous negotiations with various foreign companies to further boost investment opportunities. The recent visit by a Pakistani business delegation underscores this commitment, Hana emphasized.

According to her, creating a conducive investment environment remains a top priority for the EIC. "Ethiopia now ranks first in Eastern Africa in terms of FDI flow. However, there is still much potential to be realized."

The government is actively providing incentives to attract foreign firms. Additionally, investments in infrastructure and energy supply are on the rise, facilitating easier operations for businesses.

"The availability of raw materials and a large human resource base necessitate infrastructural development to support business activities," the Commissioner noted, adding that the on-going policy reforms are expected to further ease investment processes.

Despite the abundant opportunities, Ethiopia continues to experience unbalanced trade relations with other countries. However, the increasing flow of FDI is anticipated to help narrow this imbalance. "The growing FDI is expected to balance the trade disparities," Hana concluded.

With continuous efforts and strategic promotions, Ethiopia is on a promising path to becoming a leading destination for FDI in the African continent.

## TJ process ...

It would enable to implement the policy that aimed at ensuring lasting peace, rule of law, justice, and human rights. Therefore, he said, a team of senior experts from various institutions would be participated to take part in roadmap preparation.

The policy stipulates ensuring accountability, seeking truth, reconciliation, institutions building, reparations and various forms of reform and prevention, sometimes referred to as guarantees of non-repetition, according to Awel.

He stated that the MoJ has been working with the civil societies and human rights organizations to establish independent institutions that apply TJ policy.

Activities are being done for the implementation of TJ through preparing legal frameworks and creating public awareness to achieve inclusivity.

The Ministry has collected policy inputs by organizing over 49 forums across the country, in which more than 200 university lecturers took part in the process, he noted.

On April 17, 2024, the Council of Ministers approved the TJ policy following discussions and the incorporation of additional input. The policy aims to address human rights violations, conflicts, narratives, and abuses that have occurred in different periods in the country, it was learnt.

## Experts underscore Pretoria ...

in Africa took almost decades to be resolved. In this regard, the situation in Ethiopia could be said to be resolved in a short period of time given the intensity of the conflict at the time, the expert emphasized.

Shimelis further noted that the agreement allowed putting an end to prolonged war that could cost the lives of many more civilians. Apart from serving as a model for African countries, this success shows a new path to peaceful resolution to differences for similar situations in the country.

Despite the fact that the civil war has remained part of Ethiopia's history, it is crystal clear that nothing good has come out of wars. Thus, it could be a clear indicator that such agreements could bring lasting solutions in the nation.

According to the academician, the government is expected to create an environment where there is zero sound of guns. The same is true for actors that have different opinions on issues from the government.

The Office of National Council for the Coordination of Public Participation on the Construction of Abbay Dam Chairperson Aregawi Berehe (PhD) said for his part that activities that have been put to properly implement the agreement are highly valued by the people. The implementation of the Pretoria Agreement is encouraging which could be exemplary to many countries in similar situations.

"The fact that it was executed by African gives it a different meaning and has a big advantage.

Despite the external actors' interest to interfere, the African Union has played an immense role in resolving the problem amicably. The result would have been different had it been some interest groups meddled in the issue.

The political scholar stated, however, that the implementation of the peace accord is still not as effective as expected. "Though the major objective of the agreement is creating peace, Article 10 of the agreement is left behind."

In the implementation of the peace agreement, the issue of inclusivity should get a priority. If the accord comprises political parties and social teams, it could play a vital role for the proper implementation, Argawi (PhD), emphasized.

# Opinion

## Harvesting National Dialogue premium

BY MENGESHA AMARE

Understanding one another/each other is of paramount importance in solving problems and challenges from which people of a given nation are suffering. This viable means of addressing can be of course through close talks, fruitful discussions, amicable ways and arranging National Dialogue that can potentially accommodate ideas, opinions and attitudes of a multitudes of segments if a give society of the given nation, Ethiopia in this context.

National Dialogue --an instrument and feasible weapon towards resolving disparities, grudges, rivalries and resentments--has been conducted across the anion since recently. Ethiopia, drawing important lessons from those countries which have been registering remarkable outcomes over conflicts, disagreements and disputes, has been conducted National Dialogue across all its corners with a view to resolving number of problems emanating from whatsoever causes. As it has been done in different parts of the nation, the dialogue is planned to be conducted in the capital Addis Ababa. In conflict circumstances, is fact, National Dialogue presents a valid way to overcome internal rifts and to rebuild relations between/among nations, nationalities and peoples in Ethiopia.

Such a bold step, conducting National Dialogue, is of paramount importance in developing trust and fraternity among citizens and reinvigorate institutions and different groups in a conflict-torn society. Plus to that, the initiative is instrumental in ideally reaching a new social contract between the various interest groups staying in disagreements and conflicts.

Over the past few months, National Dialogue in Ethiopia has thus gained considerable attention in the nation and has been an important tool and even platforms for peaceful transformation and conflict resolution.

The government of Ethiopia has supported the National Dialogue Commission and is assisting latter so as to help it smoothly run a number of activities that are beneficial to the country and its people. All Ethiopians have to work on de-escalating enmity, treating the other side with respect, recognizing diversity, preparing themselves for forgiveness and ask for forgiveness. These important elements are really the outcomes of the dialogue which is being undertaken by the commission under discussion. True, dialogue bears peace and trust, and trust in turn attracts forgiveness that gets mental wound healed. In fact, forgiveness means letting go of our desire for retribution and revenge for the sake of the happiness of victim or whosoever presumed harmed. The attendees of the dialogue have to delve into discussions surrounding vital issues such as constitutional concerns, flag issues, the ways for harmonious way of living and some other critical issues. Notably, all citizens have to recognize the

pivotal role of their participation in peace building, that of the civil society and young democratic forces in shaping a constructive engagement and dialogue based on shared values and unwavering national mission--making Ethiopia stable and peaceful nation.

Basically, National Dialogue is developing the spirit of accommodating or entertaining diversity and respect them accordingly. Yes, being owner of a variety of languages, multilingualism can also be regarded as a part of multiculturalism, and this is a beauty itself. That is why Ethiopia is working to maintain such beauty by devising possible solutions to the problems stemmed from rivalry, conflict and disagreements.

True, these disagreements can be addressed through close talks and fruitful dialogues. The dialogue has been, is being, will be, a viable tool to work out the long aged and intentionally framed rivalries, disagreements and differences among national and nationalities, citizens in general. In due course of conducting dialogues of course idea and opinions have been transferred from individual to individual or from group without reservation. Good! It is this time true reconciliation can be garnered and wounds can be healed forever.

If Ethiopia does make the dialogue, National Dialogue commonly termed as, fruitful, turning itself from hub of conflicts and turmoil to an earthly heaven, will be at its imminent door step. It seems this time that the government has been working from dawn to dusk to make the National Dialogue a success. Here what is the very point that needs to be taken into account in this regard is that the issue of pushing the national into fruition should not be left only to the government as it badly requires the combined effort of all.

Conflicts, be they are recurrent, intermittent or sporadic ones, can be well addressed through the efforts of the National Dialogue as the latter is of significantly useful in beefing up social cohesion, fraternity and cooperation and togetherness for common goal--creating stable and prosperous Ethiopia.

The National Dialogue needs to incorporate all segments of the society to come up with genuine, comprehensive and truly conducted discussion thereby devising possible solutions to the all rounded problems rampant in the country. Yes, the concrete opinions, recommendations, suggestions and divergent ideologies do have critical contributions to the decisions to be reached so as to develop consensus, real agreement and trust upon each other and/or one another among the community members.

Frankly, speaking, the principal am of the National Dialogue is to provide nations, nationalities and propels with equal chance of presenting ideas, objectives, the basic and fundamental causes for all disagreements and rivalries they have been through for years. Such a bold move indeed would help

bring about real reconciliation and deep agreement.

So far a number of discussions and public forums have been conducts in different parts of the nation, and then turn is now given to Addis Ababa. Here a number of community representatives are expected to partake in various discussion forums.

Most importantly, if a given country has encountered some sorts of disagreements, rivalry or disparity, they have to device possible solutions locally without the interference of other countries as locally made solutions are highly likely long-lasting and their implementation will provide citizens with a very detailed amicable step. Here the role of all citizens, concerned bodies, civil society organizations is untold in this regard apart from the relentless effort the government along with the National Dialogue commission.

Needless to state, the National Dialogue commission and its partners are of significantly useful in raising the awareness of the general public, other actors actors on National Dialogue and helping the latter actively engage in this invaluable and most important national process, which is highly presumed to be a viable weapon to root out all the problems and hurdles from which the country and its people have been suffering for years.

Yes, the need for a National Dialogue and procedures passed before the passing of the proclamation and establishment of the commission is unquestionable. Prior to the formation of the National Dialogue commission, a number of preparatory works such as review of legal documents, historical narratives, organizational structures and best international experiences were thoroughly examined and attested. Even in due course of conducting public dialogue and consultation, a number of crucial questions were raised by the participants regarding the independence of the commission; the selection process of the commission's members; approaches to conduct the National Dialogue, and the impacts of active conflicts going on in different parts of the country. By the way, developing an in-depth knowledge of their local contexts, properly sorting out the major problems that have been causing disputes and disagreements in the country, among others, have to be well embarked on as these means help easily devise possible solutions at easy. The increasingly wide array of needs expressed by an equally broad range of actors in search of adequate and effective process support prompted the development of this comprehensive and participatory National Dialogue. Targeting at getting both internal and external actors who seek to plan, conduct, implement and support National Dialogue in an effective and efficient manner active participants, the coimmission focuses on all legitimate processes to come up with fruitful end. In simple terms, dialogue and close talk among citizens, which is carried out by the initiation

of the commission would be a prime source of peace. To make the dialogue a success, the commission together with partners and other concerned bodies is working hard across every conner of the nation.

Apart from the active participation of citizens and their representatives, Civil societies organizations have been playing a pivotal role in fostering the smooth process of the National Dialogue. In order for the National Dialogue to be successful, the commission has many responsibilities, indeed! Ethics is very important in carrying out such a delicate, inclusive and participatory process. The effective development of the dialogue process would be of significantly useful in linking citizens and the administration tiers of the federal governments. This helps get every process for peace audacious.

The commission has been proposing the continuation of the dialogue at national, regional and international levels. It also agreed to deepen discussion on critical national issues especially those which can be prime causes of disagreements and all sorts of disputes. The regional dimension the commission has created so far is important for taking into account existing regional initiatives, institutions and networks for the fruition of the National Dialogue. The National Dialogue in fact should be worked in a flexible mode. True, community representatives at all parts of the nation have been participating in various public forums with a view to fostering the appealing process of the dialogue and feedback mechanism at all levels.

In sum, recognizing the need to find a lasting peaceful end to most of the problems and conflicts rampant in the country, Ethiopia is currently actively engaged in a wide array of conducting the National Dialogue, which is an all-inclusive, participatory and wide covering one. The entire citizens, being one of the major actors in the political, economic and social spheres, have to demonstrate strong interest to participate in the country's forthcoming National Dialogue. A successful completion of the National Dialogue by itself expands the democratic and public space where all can freely engage in attaining their goals and objectives as well as the national addendum of their country. Hence, over 120 population, civil society organizations, the youth, women, professionals, activists, intellectuals, human rights activists, journalists, members of all Ethiopian community with diverse socio-political backgrounds have to be gathered to consult the future feat of the nation through constructive and fruitful dialogue on the country's complex trajectory.

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

# Editorial

## National Dialogue: Guiding light to prosperous Ethiopia

**A**s a result of the previous systems that led the country, Ethiopia has been facing several challenges that impeded its development and obscured its sustainable peace. In order to address the root cause of these challenges and then establish sustainable peace, the government has initiated the National Dialogue that stands as a shining example of the transformative power of dialogue and collaboration. This groundbreaking initiative has the potential to bring about a new era of peace, prosperity and unity in Ethiopia, a country that has faced numerous challenges in recent years.

Unquestionably, the Ethiopian National Dialogue shall produce multiple and far-reaching results. By providing a platform for representatives from various ethnic groups, political parties, and civil society organizations to come together and discuss their differences, the dialogue can help bridge the gaps that have divided Ethiopians and create a more inclusive society. This, in turn, can help reduce ethnic tensions and prevent future conflicts, fostering an environment of understanding, respect, and empathy.

Due to the malicious schemes introduced by the regimes in the previous systems, the nation has recently faced numerous challenges, including political unrest, ethnic tensions, and economic instability. Wise response of the government, there is hope on the horizon in the form of the Ethiopian National Dialogue, an initiative that has the potential to bring about meaningful change and unite the diverse ideas of Ethiopians.

Interestingly, this National Dialogue is a platform that brings together representatives from various ethnic groups, political parties, and civil society organizations to engage in open and inclusive discussions. By fostering an environment where different voices can be heard and considered, the dialogue aims to address the root causes of the country's problems and find sustainable solutions.

One of the primary benefits of this dialogue is its ability to promote understanding and empathy among different ethnic groups. By encouraging open communication and collaboration, the dialogue can help bridge the gaps that have divided Ethiopians and create a more inclusive society. This, in turn, can help reduce ethnic tensions and prevent future conflicts.

Another advantage of the national dialogue is its potential to stimulate economic growth and development. By bringing together stakeholders from various sectors of the economy, the dialogue can help identify areas where investment and reform are needed to improve productivity and create jobs. This, combined with a united political landscape, can attract foreign direct investment and spur economic growth.

By embracing the power of dialogue and collaboration, Ethiopians can work towards a more prosperous, inclusive, and harmonious future. It is time for the country to come together and demonstrate to the world that even the most complex issues can be overcome through determination, compromise, and a shared vision for a better Ethiopia.

Furthermore, this dialogue offers a unique opportunity for Ethiopians to engage in a meaningful and participatory form of governance. By giving a voice to previously marginalized communities and allowing for open and transparent decision-making, the dialogue can help empower citizens and strengthen democratic institutions. This, in turn, can lead to more responsive and accountable government, better serving the needs of the Ethiopian people.

In sum, the National Dialogue is a guiding light of hope for a more united, prosperous and inclusive Ethiopia. Through the power of dialogue and collaboration, Ethiopians will work towards a future where they continue appreciating and enjoying their differences. The time has come for the country when it will continue demonstrating its wisdom to the world by handling the most complex issues through determination, compromise and then create prosperous Ethiopia for its citizens.

# Opinion

## Navigating TB eradication in Africa by fighting drug resistance with Genomics

BY BELINDA NGONGO

Despite the advancements in tuberculosis (TB) surveillance and genomic sequencing technologies, the disease continues to be a global health crisis, constituting an excess of 10.6 million people contracting the bacterial infection in 2022. Within the same year, over 3 million people suffering from TB died. According to the Africa World Health Organisation (WHO) 2023 report, Africa alone accounted for 23% of all new cases with 31% TB-related deaths, despite only constituting 15% of the world's population.

TB mainly affects the lungs and is caused by Mycobacterium tuberculosis. The illness thrives in tight and poorly ventilated spaces where it enters through the respiratory system, usually with no noticeable symptoms where it can develop quickly within months or slowly over years. This sometimes-slow onset of symptoms, coupled with a lack of knowledge of the disease has accelerated the development of drug resistant strains of TB resulting in severe barriers to successful treatment. Many patients across the continent lack access to crucial healthcare services and they often have little to no knowledge about TB's symptoms and treatment options. In poor communities, where access to services and good nutrition is especially lacking, people living with TB are unlikely to seek and finish treatments.

Although TB is treatable, according to the WHO the biggest public health threat is Drug-Resistant TB (DR-TB) meaning mutations of the bacteria are becoming increasingly more resistant to the two-most powerful anti-TB antibiotics, rifampicin and isoniazid.

Treatment of multi-resistant TB requires treatment courses that are longer, less effective, and far more expensive than those for non-resistant TB. Globally, on average, less than 60% of those treated are successfully cured. WHO estimates in 2022 that there were 410 000 cases with resistance to rifampicin at the global level and 62, 000 in the African region.

To help combat this trend, the WHO has included in its recommendation to fight TB, the use of targeted Next Generation Sequencing (NGS) which promises greater accuracy and speed in identifying drug-resistant TB. This is beneficial to national TB programs in Africa as it can ultimately reduce the risk of transmission and give information on which strains of bacteria are circulating.

*The Landscape and Prevalence in Africa: Nigeria, Kenya, and South Africa*

The prevalence of TB is relatively high on the continent, with Nigeria, Kenya and South Africa being the most heavily impacted by the disease. In 2021, Nigeria ranked first on the African continent and 6th in the world in terms of TB prevalence. In 2023, the country had 300 000 diagnosed cases of TB, which was an improvement from the 467 000 incidents in 2021 wherein 125 000 died from the disease.

According to the WHO, Kenya had a 32% decline in TB-related incidents during 2020, which saw the country reaching its WHO "End TB Strategy" milestone for 2020, evidence that the strategy to reduce the numbers of TB cases is in fact working.

Although TB cases in South Africa have also decreased by 53% between 2015 (552 000) and 2022 (280 000) according to a study conducted by The Lancet, the country's TB burden has been listed in the top 30 by WHO, with one of the highest incident rates of reported cases in the world.

These numbers indicate that interventions are being implemented to lower infections in these three countries specifically. The challenges that the continent is facing to combat TB present

opportunities to seek alternative methods of detection, surveillance, treatment, and multi-drug resistant options, such as Next Generation Sequencing. NGS has shown to enable accurate and high-throughput decoding of TB genetic information. It is a fast, sensitive, scalable and culture-free drug susceptibility testing method that provides a comprehensive anti-TB drug resistance profile.

Routine TB drug resistance surveillance and drug-susceptibility testing (DST) are critical to combat the global TB epidemic. DST helps determine appropriate TB treatment regimes. Previous methods such as culturing the mycobacteria that causes TB can be slow and can take about a month to see what treatments are effective against the disease. With NGS, this can be done within days.

Crucial statistical information provides medical researchers and healthcare workers with critical data which can help to address gaps in the management and treatment of this disease. By stressing detection in underserved communities, improving patient support by development of personalised medicines through genomic sequencing is helping to increase adherence to treatments and most importantly, by closing the disease knowledge gap by creating awareness in previously hard to reach areas to foster understanding and impact of the disease; countries can further reduce the impact of this disease on their populations.

In the quest to eradicate TB and its various drug resistant strains, scientists across the globe need to be equipped with cutting-edge technologies such as NGS. This means that innovations need to have the capacity to accurately detect, analyse, and characterise TB strains across the board.

Through NGS, genomic-based TB surveillance is possible and empowers the medical scientists with the ability to not only detect TB, characterise anti-TB drug resistance, but equally enhance the monitoring of the evolution and subsequent mutation of DR-TB to develop new treatments, which are critical for elimination.

*A future-fit solution: Genomics sequencing and NGS for TB eradication*

Innovations such as NGS, a technology used for DNA (Deoxyribonucleic acid) and RNA (ribonucleic acid) sequencing to track genetic mutations, boast capacity to isolate genetic materials associated with the presence of Multi-Drug Resistant TB (MTB) and anti-drug TB resistance for advancing the field of research.

NGS involves the sequencing of large amounts of small DNA fragments simultaneously, while improving workflows for precisely detecting TB for drug resistance profiling. Subsequently, the applications of NGS towards the eradication of the disease are infinite and provide a crucial solution for the surveillance of TB within public health.

By harnessing the power of genomics, the medical industry can usher in a new era of precision medicine, where treatment decisions are informed by the unique genetic profiles of patients and their infecting strains. However, realising the full potential of NGS necessitates sustained investments in research, capacity-building, and equitable access to technology, particularly in regions hardest hit by the disease.

In the quest to successfully rollout sequencing technologies, and help fight the eradication of TB, it is prudent to have technological partners that are at the pioneering end of scientific discovery. Illumina, whose technology, together with scientific partners on genomic sequencing and TB surveillance, has helped accurately assess drug resistant markers for, and beyond the scope, of TB.

*The author, Belinda Ngongo is Director of Global Health External Affairs, Illumina*

**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

## Endeavoring for promoting fishery in Ethiopia

BY MENGESHA AMARE

There are several rivers, lakes and reservoirs in different parts of Ethiopia that can foster fish farming potential and contribute to the development of Ethiopia. In Ethiopia in all fishing areas most fishermen are organized in cooperatives, representing the communities around the lake, reservoirs on the islands, although a considerable number of individual fishermen are operating outside the framework of cooperatives, simply because it is open access resources.

Taking the significance of fishery for economic development into account, *The Ethiopian Herald* had a stay with Molla Jegol an agro economist graduated from Bahor Dar University. He said, "Ethiopia has been a landlocked country since 1993, so its fishery comes exclusively from inland water bodies. These water bodies include lakes, rivers, streams, reservoirs and substantial wetlands that are of great socio-economic, ecological and scientific importance. Fishing has been the main source of protein supply for many Ethiopians particularly for those who are residing in the vicinity of major water bodies."

Molla also said that fish handling in Ethiopia is at its lowest level and remains at its traditional stage. Starting from the collection of fishes from the net or hooks, fish are processed/ filleted on the floors of boats and mostly sold on the shoreline of the water bodies.

He further said that even though fish provides a great contribution to fishing community, it is characterized with low production and underutilization due to, rudimentary and labor-intensive fishing gears, inaccessibility to potential market areas, lack of developed processing technology, lack of government support, absence of strong and well functioned policy, over fishing, illegal fishermen, shore cultivation, deforestation, lack of training and extension services.

Fishery production system practiced with the combination of motorized gill net, traditional reed-rafts, chase and trap and processed in the form of gutting and filleting on the shore water bodies. Even the fishery sector highly contributes to sustaining livelihood of rural fishing community, it is mainly artisanal that characterized with low production and underutilization due to, high post-harvest losses, poor infrastructure and access to fishing materials, overfishing, agricultural expansion and wetland degradation, climate change and invasive weeds, he added.

Fishery is one of the important and renewable natural resource bases for many developing countries like Ethiopia, and the livelihood of many rural communities relies on the sector. Accordingly, fishery is key sector for reducing poverty and it could be considered as a potential strategy because it helps to diversify household income directly and/or indirectly, he opined.

"Historically, Africa's fisheries' output is dominated by capture fisheries and the total amount of fish produced from aquaculture is grown from time to time over the past decade. In Ethiopia fish production depends on the inland waters for the supply of fish as a cheap source of animal protein. It can also



Fishing Lake Hawassa, Ethiopia— Rift Valley lakes and catching Tilapia and Catfish

indirectly contribute by providing revenue for purchasing food for deficient areas. The country has different geological formations and climatic conditions endowed with considerable water resources and wetland ecosystems, including river basins, major lakes, many swamps, floodplains and man-made reservoirs," he said.

As to him, the fish supply in most cases comes from the major lakes and some reservoirs such as Fincha, Hawassa, Tana, Chamo, Ziway, Koka, Abaya, and rivers in the country.

As to Molla, from local to regional, continental or even global levels, fisheries play important role food supply, income generation, employment creation and nutrition security. However, the Ethiopian lakes are threatened by poor production system with catchment's deforestation, water pollution and siltation, overfishing, habitat destruction, invasion of non-native species, illegal, unregulated fishing, and poor governance and it is far below its potential.

Improvements in fishery sector highly contribute to sustaining livelihood of rural fishing community and ensure environmental sustainability in Ethiopia.

Fisheries production in Ethiopia is still under-exploited with limited access and supply to fish and fishery products, while the current and future demand projection is increasing in food marketing system. The rapid increases in fish supply required over the next decades will only be possible, if these fisheries are sustained and improved. So, this paper attempts to review the overview of Ethiopian fisheries production system and its challenges in different fish potential areas that help to provide organized information and drop a line that needs an assessment or an intervention to maintain the resource in the sustainable manners, Molla said.

Ethiopian Fishery is a part of the sea or rivers, and fisheries refer to an organized effort by humans to catch fish or other aquatic species, an activity known as fishing. All fishing activities are categorized in capture fishery and Aquaculture. Aquaculture

involves cultivating freshwater and saltwater populations under controlled conditions. Ethiopia is endowed with inland waters for fish production as a cheap source of animal protein.

The fish production from a number of water bodies is supporting the livelihood of poor farmers living around water bodies in providing inexpensive, but high-quality protein and diversifying sources of income, he added.

Current fishery production system in Ethiopia is known as the water tower of Eastern Africa, which provides about 86% of the Nile water. The country has a number of beautiful lakes, reservoirs and small water bodies that distributed throughout the country and covering wide total surface area. Rivers Awash and Omo-Gibe terminate in to Lakes Abbe and Turkana, which are shared by Ethiopia with Djibouti and Kenya, respectively.

Fish production system in Ethiopia is based on the principle of open access to resources that characterized with different fishing gears. In fish production system fishing gear technology commonly functioned in Ethiopian fisheries include gillnets, beach seines, long-lines, hook-and-line, and cast nets. In addition to this different form of forms of traps, scoop nets and baskets made of plant materials and wires are also used, particularly in the rivers of Ethiopia.

In all production systems, most of the fish catches from the lakes reach the market by traditional means of transportation without any preservation facilities. Some fishermen hook some of the fish together with a string and carry them by hand to the market for immediate cash income. Others put the fish in a basket, cover them with fresh leaves and carry them by hand. Still others collect their catch in sacks and carry it to the market by hand or on donkeys, taxi etc.

Traditionally, small-scale or artisanal fisheries are used to characterize those fisheries that were mainly non-mechanized with low level of production due to constraints faced. The

fishermen were gutting or filleting in the shore of the lake with poor quality.

He further stated that the problems may rise due poor awareness of fishermen on the length of first sexual maturity. In all areas poor fishery resource exploitation emerge due to inadequate legal and policy frameworks and inadequately implementation of existing fishery laws and regulations. On the other hand, cooperatives poorly performed in resource utilization and management that lead to an individual or private fisher are expanding that often accused of being illegal and exploit the resource.

The big challenges for overfishing is uncontrolled and excess fishing practices, using narrow mesh sized nets, lack of government control over fishing and lack of sense of ownership on the resource.

Climate change seriously causes depletion of fishery activities in a certain country. Higher inland water temperatures decline the availability of fish stocks by altering water quality and the trophic status of a given aquatic ecosystems. Sometimes due to rainfall vibration the highest runoff happened in different areas that bring the sediment load in the water bodies.

So, the government should be taking a regular follow up of each fishing activities in different areas related to resource utilization and management. Therefore, the government and other concerned stakeholders must work together on the reducing methods and controlling mechanism in anthropogenic activities and water hyacinth.

Additionally, the sectors line on traditional system with the absence of modern and strong value chain-based fish production, processing and marketing coordination. This all mentioned problems are some of the research gap that needs a critical and proper assessment in all fish potential area to sustain the sector with its grate contribution for the whole economic activities of the country. So, any interested search organization or individual researcher should be conducting the research on indicated direction.

# Art & Culture

## One of the biggest African Capitals is growing but Addis hardly shades its old skin

BY MULUGETA GUDETA

Imagine an Old Italian carabinieri from the occupation period coming back to Addis from hell or heaven and asking you where Piazza has vanished. What would you tell him? That the old Piazza has vanished physically but would continue to exist in people's imaginations and memories and dreams? That would be unlikely to convince your unusual visitor. Piazza, his piazza as he knew it, walking in the narrow streets with his Italian rifle dangling from his shoulder, the appetite-whetting smell of macaroni or spaghetti hanging in the noontime air, wafting through the tiny shops where cafe latte was sold in cups imported from Rome-well, that Piazza is gone forever now.

Even the living former residents of Piazza are coming to terms with the change that had caught their neighborhoods unawares.

Wait a minute or a year, but Piazza will inevitably be rebuilt and you may call the new or ultra modern neighborhood something like "Piazza Nova" (The New Piazza) as some of the landmarks are called Addis Ketema (New Town), Addisu Kera (the new slaughterhouse) or Addissu Gebeya (The new market). There are so many places in the Ethiopian capital that are called Addissu this and Addissu that, even in their old ages. Addis Ketema retained its old name until the old shacks were replaced with high rise buildings and its name disappeared as if it was buried under the new structures.

Addis Ababa was first imagined by Empress Taitu and it is still coveting for newness.

One of the mysteries of the Ethiopian capital is its architectural "misto" (mix) or the coexistence of the old with the new in an uneasy neighborhood. Old shacks lean on new buildings or survive in their shadows as if their longevity depends on this uneasy coexistence. Take for instance Senga Tera, (bull market) the place formerly known as a market for oxen and then changed into "commerce" because the College of Commerce was built on the very spot where bulls locked horns and escaped from their owners and ran along the dusty streets of bygone years as if they were the fighting bulls from an old Spanish bullfighting arena. Even the once famous Spanish bullfighting vividly portrayed by Ernst Hemingway in his famous novel entitled "The Sun Also Rises" or "Fiesta", is slowly disappearing. Hemingway, as you may know, was a correspondent to a Canadian newspaper called "The Star" and his best pastime, if not his obsession, was to watch young bullfighters or matadors wrestle with well-fed bulls and kill them with their swords at end of the show. That was not only macho. It was also cruel and horrible



*Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa is excelling in improving its structural facilities*

to animal rights activists who managed to get the show outlawed in some Spanish towns.

Fortunately, the bulls from the old bull market used to be taken home and slaughtered as sacrifices to this or that public holiday. All that is gone now, for good.

The shacks of Addis Ababa are often resilient to change in the sense that they often resist or survive modernization. Until recently the shacks around Sheraton Hotel were still existing and serving as cheap hotels or drinking outlets or shops until the juggernaut of reconstruction reached their doors and turned them to dust within an hour or so. This is exactly what happened to old and now-defunct Piazza. What is amazing is the speed with which entire neighborhoods that took decades to construct disappeared within hours.

That may be taken as the ruthless face of modernity.

Of course, the demolishing of old neighborhoods was bound to divide public opinion as it was the case with Piazza. Lives, memories and livelihoods disappeared in an instant and that was difficult for residents to swallow although they were bound to get used to it because time is said to be the best palliative. Nowadays, there is less talk about that event as if everyone has finally come to terms with what happened. Addis Ababa, as its name indicates, is never ending its renewal. This was because it was initially built haphazardly and without any master plan and foreigners had a huge impact in its foundation and growth.

According to a female blogger who wrote about Piazza, and about her personal impressions said, "We begin in Piassa, the oldest part of Addis Ababa, rich in heritage buildings and original traces of the city before its expansion into the new construction being built now. My first time walking the streets of Piassa

on my earlier trips was so refreshing, because I was used to being in Bole (the newer buildings, downtown area, mall etc) of the city. Not that I don't like Bole, I do! But Piassa has its own style, a unique heartbeat, from its street shopping, vintage balconies to its historic cafes, Piassa is not to be missed if you are visiting in Addis Ababa."

This is now a story from a bygone era. The blogger nevertheless continued to share her impressions saying, "For those living in Addis Ababa... I have come to understand that Ethiopians commonly tend to stay to what and where they know. Just as most people in Ethiopia don't travel very much outside of their birth city, people in Addis Ababa similarly tend to stay to the parts they live and work. I guess that is normal for any place, similarly to when I lived in New York, folks in Brooklyn had all they needed in BK, folks in Harlem were not going to travel all the way down to Brooklyn for what they could get on their own block. This is a universal human trait. However, if I shared this trait, I would not have seen so much of this beautiful world, and I would not be typing this now to share it with you. I give you my eyes, so you may see what you haven't (yet)."

The Indian-style one-story residential quarters have now disappeared after the demolishing. The houses had typical Indian architecture although the initial resident had long gone back to Bombay or Calcutta. Businesses had taken their places and the inexorable march of time have turned them into the new victims. It seems that cities, like human beings are born, grow up, get older and die in one way or another. They give space to the new and the upcoming while they leave behind their memories and recollections that will also inevitably die with the passage of time. Whether we like or no, the newly built high rises of Addis that adorn its skylines now, will one day be considered backward and old and be replaced with new structures.

Behind or around the new construction projects in the old Legehar neighborhood, there is a frenzy of construction while the shacks that used to be the dominant features of the area are now trying to hide their aging faces and struggling to survive the advance of the modernizing juggernaut.

The bottom line is that city neighborhoods appear at one time and disappear at another, without even leaving any traces of their former existence. I recently read an interesting article about an old town in Colombia called Artacanta which was the birthplace of the Nobel Prize winning author Gabriel Garcia Marquez who used the town as the setting for his classic novel, "One Hundred Years of Solitude". That is the town where he grew up and gathered his recollections or the materials that went into the writing of the book later on. In 2007 Garcia Marquez visited the town and he spoke about the shock he felt when he saw how it had gone from its years of grandeur to sharp decline in a relatively short time. He said that he did not recognize most of the popular places he frequented during his younger years and felt depressed by how the whole place had turned old and dismal.

Towns and cities do not always remain young as humans do not. While ageing is natural, it may also be a curse or a boon depending on the circumstances. Addis Ababa which has turned from what visitors then called "a village in the forests", is not as such an old city. Many cities around the world are many centuries old and still undergoing changes. Whether we like it or not, Addis is also bound to change. What is important is to know how this change is implemented, whether it will be lasting or be a temporary facelift. Or weather change comes with a human face. There are winners and losers in the process; and if it may be difficult to accommodate all the competing interests it may be advisable to at least strike the right balance so that the winners far outnumber the losers.

Another quote from the blogger could well serve as a personal reminiscence of the old Piassa that is now alive only in people's memories. "We walked around Piassa, and the old, mysterious buildings I once walked past everyday soon became open books of stories I was hearing for the first time. Piassa is literally a living museum. Learning such incredible history opened my understanding even wider to the vast world that is Ethiopia. From the Armenian and Indian inspired architecture, to the delicious cakes and macchiato at Enrico's cafe, every time spent together was rich with beauty, inspiration and education. Not only that, my love and drive to be a part of something bigger for Ethiopia has been rejuvenated"

# Global Affairs

## Lessons from youth-focused

### 'Future Action Festival' ahead of UN Summit of the future

The world has crossed the halfway point to the end of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) era amid multiple, unprecedented, and significantly destructive global shocks. Two of the most pressing global challenges are the climate crisis and the threat of nuclear armament. Of serious concern is a severe lack of youth engagement on issues of critical global importance.

Speaking to IPS during the 2024 UN Civil Society Conference, the outcome of which will inform high-level discussions when the UN hosts hundreds of world leaders, policymakers, experts, and advocates in September at the Summit of the Future in New York, Tadashi Nagai stressed the importance of coalition and movement building and youth engagement to escalate progress towards attainment of the SDGs.

"In March 2024, the Future Action Festival took place in Tokyo, attended by approximately 66,000 people and over half a million viewers via live streaming. The event was a collaborative effort by youth and citizen groups to foster a deeper understanding and proactive stance among young people on nuclear disarmament and climate change solutions as two issues of global concern," said Nagai, a representative of the Soka Gakkai International organization and the organizing committee of the Future Action Festival at the Nairobi conference.

The organizing committee comprised representatives from six organizations, including GeNuine, Greenpeace Japan, Japan Youth Council, Kakuwaka Hiroshima, Youth for TPNW, and Soka Gakkai International (SGI) Youth. Nagai said the high impact committee is reflective of a tangible, impactful coalition and movement building towards resolving issues of global, national, and local concern in the two major existential threats today—nuclear weapons and the climate crisis.

Nagai spoke of the inalienable link between youth engagement and the delivery of the promise of a peaceful world—a requisite for the attainment of the SDGs and other related global and national commitments. In the lead-up to the Future Action Festival, a youth awareness survey was conducted across Japan from November 2023 to February 2024, targeting individuals ranging from their 10s to their 40s. The survey focused on thematic areas such as society, climate change, nuclear weapons, youth and social systems, and the United Nations.

The survey results were illuminating, providing insights into how the youth perceive these issues and their possible role in resolving them. On the realization of a world free from nuclear weapons for instance, survey results showed that 82 percent of the respondents said nuclear weapons are not needed. Based on a sample size of 119,925 respondents, nuclear abolition is a widely shared vision among young people in Japan.

"We come with lessons from Japan on how civil society organizations represented at the Nairobi conference can build impactful, informative, and life-transforming coalitions



Soka Gakkai International representative and member of the organizing committee for the Future Action Festival, Tadashi Nagai, stressed the importance of coalition and movement building and youth engagement to escalate progress towards attainment of the SDGs. Credit: Joyce Chimbi/IPS

and movements to address the most existential threats facing humanity today. This particular conference is unique, historic, and highly critical as it comes ahead of the UN Summit of the Future. The Future Action Festival was an opportunity to collect the voices of young people on issues of critical importance to the global community, in the same way that the outcome of the Nairobi conference will inform the UN Summit later on in September," Nagai said.

Through the festival, the committee was determined to contribute to UN initiatives and endorse the newly-established UN Youth Office. Additionally, it aims to create momentum to strengthen international cooperation and solidarity toward a peaceful and sustainable future.

With this in mind, a joint declaration from the Future Action Festival was submitted to the UN to inform, influence, and shape high-level discussions at the Summit towards the production of three international frameworks: the Pact for the Future (available as a zero draft), the Global Digital Compact, and the Declaration on Future Generations. Nagai said that the Pact for the Future must be ambitious, inclusive, and innovative.

Under the theme, Summit of the Future: Multilateral Solutions for a Better Tomorrow, the summit aims to forge a new global consensus on what a collective future should look like and what can be done today to secure it. Enhancing cooperation on critical challenges and addressing gaps in global governance, reaffirming existing commitments, including to the SDGs, towards a reinvented multilateral system better

placed to positively impact lives. The Summit of the Future will create conditions to help fast-track implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development be more readily attained.

Affirming the critical role of young people in sustainable development, the position of world leaders in the 2030 Agenda is that SDGs would only be attained if they were of the people, by the people, and for the people. The 2030 Agenda invites citizen engagement, especially from young people, to "channel their infinite capacities for activism into the creation of a better world," Nagai said.

Hence the link between the civil society conference, the summit, and other events such as the Future Action Festival—all geared towards effectively addressing issues of global concern such as climate change, war, and worsening inequalities. Every proposal offered by the UN Secretary-General for consideration at the UN Summit of the Future will have demonstrable impacts on the achievement of the SDGs.

Ultimately, the Nairobi conference was a process of renewal of trust and solidarity at all levels—between peoples, countries, and generations. Making a case for a fundamental rethink of political, economic, and social systems so that they deliver more fairly and effectively for everyone.

At the closing of the conference, Mithika Mwenda, of the Pan African Climate Justice Alliance, emphasized the need for "boldness and honest conversations" to achieve the radical transformations needed to ensure sustainable development for all, poverty alleviation, and ultimately, an action-oriented

Pact for the Future (one of the expected outcomes of the Summit).

Civil society groups and organizations also recommended a corresponding renewal of the multilateral system, with the Summit of the Future as a defining moment to agree on the most critical improvements necessary to deliver a future defined by equality, fairness, and shared prosperity.

Secretary-General António Guterres and Kenyan President William Ruto praised the efforts of civil society and underscored their "indispensable contributions."

In his address, Guterres said time and again that he had witnessed the enormous impact of civil society in every corner of the world; easing suffering, pushing for peace and justice, standing for truth, and advancing gender equality and sustainable development, with many working at great personal risk.

Regarding current conflicts, including Gaza, Sudan, and ongoing crises in the Sahel, Great Lakes, and Horn of Africa regions, he said that the UN would not give up on the "push for peace, justice, and human rights."

He recognized that civil society was crucial to addressing many issues in the world, including closing digital divides and revitalizing the collective approach to peace and security.

"We need to be informed by your frontline know-how; we need your can-do attitude to overcome obstacles and find innovative solutions," said Guterres. "We need you to use your networks, knowledge, and contacts to implement solutions and to persuade governments to act."

(SOURCE: INTER PRESS SERVICE)



## Law & Politics

# United Africa for continental advancement

BY EYUEL KIFLU

On May 25, 1963, 32 Heads of independent African States met in Addis Ababa to sign the Charter creating Africa's first post-independence continental institution - the Organization of African Unity (OAU). This massive continental organ was established by these ambitious African leaders with the goal of promoting unity and interdependence across the continent.

In 2002, the OAU was replaced by the African Union (AU), which currently has 55 member states. The AU focuses on advancing peace, security, and development in Africa, addressing issues such as conflict resolution, economic integration, and human rights. Other priorities include regional cooperation, infrastructure development, and efforts to combat poverty and disease.

Every year on May 25, Africa Day is commemorated to mark the founding of the OAU. This celebration is observed by African countries and globally through various programs. This year's Africa Day theme is "Education Fit for the 21st Century".

The AU has made education a top priority in recent years, implementing initiatives to improve access, quality, and equity in schooling across the diverse African countries. One of the AU's flagship programs is the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA 16-25), a 10-year plan launched in 2016 to revitalize education and training systems. Through CESA, the AU has supported the expansion of early childhood services, the training of over 1 million additional teachers, and the integration of STEM curricula in schools.

The AU has also emphasized improving the quality of education, not just expanding access. Through teacher training and investments in infrastructure and learning materials, student learning outcomes have begun to rise. However, significant challenges remain, including high dropout rates, disparities between rural and urban areas, and a need for greater investment in technical and vocational training.

With strong political will, innovative programs, and a steadfast commitment to education, the African Union is steadily transforming the landscape of learning across the continent. As Africa's young population continues to grow, these investments in human capital will be crucial to unlocking the continent's immense economic potential and securing a brighter future for all.

One of Agenda 2063's flagship programs supporting the continent's educational excellence is the African Virtual and



**With unity, innovation and a commitment to sustainable progress, the AU is poised to lead Africa towards a brighter, more prosperous future**

E-University. This project aims to use ICT-based programs to increase access to tertiary and continuing education in Africa by reaching large numbers of students and professionals in multiple sites simultaneously.

In his African Day message, African Union Commission (AUC) Chairperson Moussa Faki Mahamat expressed solidarity with the continent's pursuit of inclusive prosperity and peace outlined in Agenda 2063. He highlighted Africa's liberation from colonialism and apartheid, emphasizing its intellectual, scientific, cultural growth,

and economic progress. Mahamat praised Africa's resilience during the global COVID-19 crisis and credited Africa CDC for its significant role in the continental response.

Mahamat acknowledged challenges such as demographic growth, social constraints, foreign interference, governance issues hindering the transformation of Africa's assets into social justice and inclusive prosperity. He urged increased efforts to address crises like terrorism, unemployment, migration, democratic values erosion for sustainable peace and security.

The AUC Chairperson commended African youth and women for their contributions to liberation and development progress. He stressed the need for unity, integration, and defence of African dignity through reforming the Organization of African Unity to fulfil its founding fathers' vision.

With Africa's youthful population and abundant resources, Mahamat called for a shift towards substantial development rather than settling for subpar progress.

As the AU celebrates its 61st anniversary, leaders from around the world have extended their congratulations. Russian President Vladimir Putin congratulated African nations on African Day, highlighting their triumph over colonialism and pursuit of freedom, peace, and prosperity. He praised Africa's economic and social progress, emphasizing its growing global influence.

Putin commended the AU and regional bodies for fostering cooperation and addressing conflicts. Russia values strong ties with Africa, aiming for a fair, multipolar world order based on equality and international law without discrimination or sanctions.

Also, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau stated on May 25 that, "Sixty-one years ago today, representatives of African countries founded the Organization of African Unity, now the African Union. On this anniversary, we join our partners to

celebrate this important union that has made strides toward a more peaceful, sustainable, and prosperous African continent."

Trudeau emphasized Canada's commitment to strengthening collaboration with African partners and supporting African-led solutions to challenges. He highlighted initiatives such as the Canada-African Union Commission Dialogues and Canada's dedicated mission to the African Union in Addis Ababa.

Trudeau also mentioned working with African counterparts to promote quality education in line with this year's Africa Day theme, 'Education Fit for the 21st Century.'

Beyond this, the continent has experienced various challenges over time. To achieve Agenda 2063, Africans still have much work to do. The flagship projects of the Agenda require concerted efforts from all Africans, particularly in addressing ongoing conflicts and promoting unity.

Also, East Africa grapples with conflicts, while West Africa continues to face challenges like coup d'état. It is crucial for the continent to harness its workforce's potential for development.

Moreover, financial independence is key for making decisions autonomously. Strengthening institutions like the African Development Bank and establishing supportive banks are vital for continental progress amidst financial crises.

Overall, the 61st anniversary of the founding of the Organization of African Unity, now the African Union, is an important milestone for the continent. The AU has made significant strides in promoting peace, security, and development across Africa, addressing critical issues like conflict resolution, economic integration, and human rights.

However, challenges remain, including ongoing conflicts, governance issues, and the need for greater investment in areas like education and infrastructure. To achieve the ambitious goals of Agenda 2063, the AU and its member states must continue to work collaboratively, harnessing the potential of Africa's youthful population and abundant resources.

As world leaders extend their congratulations, it is clear that the African Union has an increasingly important role to play on the global stage. With unity, innovation, and a commitment to sustainable progress, the AU is poised to lead Africa towards a brighter, more prosperous future. The commemoration of Africa Day serves as a powerful reminder of the continent's resilience and the promise that lies ahead.

# Planet Earth



## Practical action necessary to prevent climate crisis in the Horn of Africa region

BY ZEKARIAS WOLDEMARIAM

The IGAD Climate Prediction and Applications Centre (ICPAC) issued the June to September 2024 seasonal forecast indicating an increased likelihood of above-normal rainfall over most parts of the Greater Horn of Africa (GHA). The areas expected to experience these above-normal conditions include Djibouti, Eritrea, central and northern Ethiopia, western and coastal Kenya, much of Uganda, South Sudan, and Sudan.

The report indicated on the other hand that parts of northern Somalia, isolated areas over western Ethiopia, and north-western South Sudan are expected to experience drier-than-normal conditions. The climate patterns in the JJAS 2024 period closely resemble those of 1998 and 2010, both of which experienced wetter-than-normal conditions over much of the region.

An early to normal onset is expected in several parts of the region including central and northern Ethiopia, Eritrea, Sudan, and South Sudan. However, a delayed onset is likely in Djibouti, parts of eastern and western Ethiopia, central and western Sudan, and southern South Sudan.

The temperature forecast shows a probability of warmer-than-normal conditions across the region, particularly over northern Sudan, central and western Ethiopia, Somalia, Kenya, Rwanda, Burundi, and Tanzania.

Dr. Guleid Artan, ICPAC's Director noted that "The Greater Horn of Africa (GHA) stands as a region that is highly susceptible to the adverse impacts of climate change, which pose significant challenges to the resilience of our communities. The

forecasted wetter-than-normal conditions for June to September 2024 echo the patterns of 1998 and 2010, highlighting the level of impact especially for South Sudan and Sudan, which may experience impacts of floods."

"As we observe these recurring extreme climate events, it is important to acknowledge the pivotal role played by early warning systems which serve as key instruments of preparedness, guiding us through climate variability. Through our operations, ICPAC continues to provide actionable climate information that is relevant and key for Early Action," he added.

In line with the World Meteorological Organization's guidelines and recommendations, ICPAC has adopted an objective seasonal forecast method to generate climate forecasts for the Greater Horn of Africa. May 2024 initialized seasonal forecasts from 9 Global Producing Centers (GPCs) were utilized and processed to develop the June - September 2024 seasonal climate outlook. The seasonal forecasts and their hind cast data were analyzed to provide a probabilistic forecast indicating the likelihood of above-normal, normal, or below-normal rainfall.

Extreme events are occurrences of unusually severe weather or climate conditions that can cause devastating impacts on communities and agricultural and natural ecosystems. Weather-related extreme events are often short-lived and include heat waves, freezes, heavy downpours, tornadoes, tropical cyclones and floods. Climate-related extreme events either persist longer than weather events or emerge from the accumulation of weather or climate events that persist over a longer

period of time. Examples include drought resulting from long periods of below-normal precipitation or wildfire outbreaks when a prolonged dry, warm period follows an abnormally wet and productive growing season.

Given all these changing trends in climatic conditions in East Africa, and the decades-old vulnerability of the region, IGAD's Climate Modeling Expert (Climate Scientist) Hussein Seid (PhD) says governments and the concerned institutions must take proactive action to address the impact of climate change. So as I mentioned earlier we need to move like from this reactive approach which is responding and reacting quickly to the situation to more of this proactive approach which is preparing and planning for future circumstances.

According to ICPAC's report as well as Hussein's earlier explanation the current situation is going to also increase these climate Extremes in the future in our region.

"We should invest in climate-resilient infrastructures. This could be like flood protection measures it could be resilient agricultural practices, and also the irrigation systems or strengthening dams. This kind of I think Investments are very key to reducing the impact of climate extremes. Also, we need to implement adaptation strategies tailored to local contexts if there are areas affected by droughts then we need to promote these drought-resistant crops"

The expert further reiterates that as part of the precautionary activities concerned bodies need to implement sustainable land management practices and diversifying the livelihoods of the people to reduce dependence on the climate sector. He

explains that there are several ways and also one of the adaptation tools is the early warning system or government really should invest in the development of a robust early warning system that provides timely and accurate information to the vulnerable population.

These climate extremes are increasing from time to time and we are likely also to experience more extremes in the future under a changing climate. So we need to prepare for that one. We need to use the available information, to prepare and also, reduce the impact of this climate extreme that we are currently seeing. It is important to invest in the climate smart infrastructures.

"All the things that we are doing currently should be climate Smart in the agriculture sector in the infrastructure or even the other sectors, need to be climate smart. So that is what I'm saying. We need to use the available information. Now the national methodological agencies are issuing forecasts and warning information"

According to Hussein in addition to issuing the necessary cautionary information and warning system, it is important to take practical actions that go along with the early warning system. "The Regional Climate Center, ICPAC is producing this information. So the information is there but the action is not really to that level. So for example for this season, we have issued a forecast in February that we are going to experience and enhance the rainfall over our region. So we issued we have shared this information with our stakeholders but the actions that are taken are not really that satisfactory"