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'Prime time to build bridges to foster unity, dev't aspirations': Premier

BY STAFF REPORTER

ADDIS ABABA – It's high time for Ethiopian citizens to craft bridges that foster interpersonal engagements and realize national development expeditions, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) said.

The Prime Minister made the above remark on Sunday while inaugurating the newly constructed Abbay Bridge, which is built on Abbay River in Bahir Dar city of Amhara State as part of the Trans-African road in the presence of various federal and regional senior government officials.

He further emphasized that this landmark bridge built on own capacity and huge investment would be a breaking point to foster people-to-people connections, social networks and facilitate potential business and investment opportunities.

Having said the country has long been confronted with many ups and downs, he urged

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Tokyo University desirous of collaborating with AAU in startup ecosystem

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

ADDIS ABABA-The University of Tokyo expressed its desire to collaborate with Addis Ababa University (AAU) in areas of startup ecosystems and electronic skins.

Tokyo University Vice President Prof. Someya Takao told *The Ethiopian Herald* the two universities have been under negotiation to work together in the aforesaid areas. "We want to collaborate with AAU since the latter is the leading educational institution in Ethiopia and it is

See Tokyo University... page 3



Gov't raises over 154 mln Birr for Clean Ethiopia

BY ESSEYE MENGISTE

ADDIS ABABA- The Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) disclosed that over 154,000,000 Birr has been collected through the digital telethon in a single day

See Gov't raises over 154... page 3

WMO African conference deals pressing climatic challenges

BY YESUF ENDRIS

ADDIS ABABA- The nineteenth session of World Meteorological Organization's (WMO) Regional Association I (Africa) conference, which is set to deliberate on major climate challenges including the El Niño, opened yesterday.

In a press conference held yesterday, Association President and Ethiopian Meteorological Institute Director General Fetene Teshome said that Association's member countries are discussing climate priorities including ways to tackle the El Niño case. The conference also held talks on infrastructural development, financial and data distribution issues.

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News

Woliata Sodo spares no effort to become smart city: Mayor

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

ADDIS ABABA— The national cleaning campaign and green development program that poised to create conducive environment for residents is progressing well in Woliata Sodo, City Mayor said.

Approached by the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA), Woliata Sodo City Mayor Jegena Ayiza said that green development, cleaning are being implemented in and outskirts of the city for beautification and climate change solution.

According to him, the city administration has covered a hectare of land with forest and an additional 1.5 hectare is also being developed to mitigate climate change.

Drainage, road construction, culvert are renewed to discharge the waste materials in a modern and multipurpose manner, he stated.

Some 21 million Birr has been budgeted for the progress of green development and solid waste management, he said, adding that his administration is implementing the



Photo: Dagne Abera

project through participating residents and government bodies.

“We have identified dumping grounds to manage waste in which we have finished the first phase on 10 hectares of land and we are on the way to start another,” Jegena noted.

As to him, the cleaning campaign is well

underway in household, private and religious institutions to sorting out solid waste in order to avoid toxic chemicals and recycling them for additional benefits.

“Thus, we are creating a city of favorable tourist attraction and center of regional and national conference,” he noted.

He further said that Woliata Sodo is also undertaking corridor development projects by drawing lesson from Addis Ababa city to become smart city in southern Ethiopia for its cleanliness and tourist attraction.

The city administration organized associations for door-to-door waste collection activities while the residents are cleaning their premises and roads to recycle wastes, according to the Mayor.

Jegena expressed that the city which is home to various tourist attractions sites has seen the development of the hotel industry that contributed for the rising of tourist influx compared to previous years.

The city is also the political center and seat of the chief administrator of South Ethiopia State, he stressed.

Authority pins hope on concerted efforts to tackle Addis' pollution

BY MESERET BEHAILU

ADDIS ABABA — Consolidated efforts would play a paramount role in containing environmental pollution making the metropolis a suitable place to live, the Addis Ababa Environmental Protection Authority said.

The Authority organized yesterday a half-day discussion forum under the theme *Biklet Yebika Wubet Yinka* aiming to discuss with higher education institutions leaders on the issue of environmental protection.

In his opening remark, Authority's General Manager Dida Diriba stated that protecting the environment needs a combined effort as it is the cause of every citizen.

Awareness creation among the society, advocacy, stakeholders' integration and the likes would bring a paramount role in protecting the environment from wastage and realize clean Addis. Dida also noted that from the plastic products, just a half (close to 40,000 tons) is being recycled annually. Addis Ababa generates 9% of plastic wastage whilst some 73,750 tons is estimated to be produced annually. “Among other impacts, environmental pollution is damaging the image of the metropolis, affecting the community, animals and infrastructure and shortening the life span of the drainage system which has been built at enormous cost.”

Presenting an initial discussion paper, Authority's Environmental Pollution Community Impact Assessment Act Compliance Director Lamessa Gudeta said that the capital has some 76 rivers whilst it needs serious protection from pollution to realize a clean environment.

The World Bank's 2022 report indicated that environmental pollution has caused over nine million deaths at the international level. However, Addis is more polluted compared with the international standard which has increased from 35% to 40%.

The Director further highlighted that weak drainage and sanitation system, industry expansion, presence of old-aged vehicles, the society's limited awareness, and lack of adequate commitment are among the major challenges that are hindering environmental conservation.

The authority has been working tirelessly to end environmental pollution through various advocacy campaigns and dedicated different months for different types of pollution. Accordingly, it meant the month of April for plastic pollution, May for air pollution and June for water pollution. July dedicated for soil or earth pollution, August themed for sound pollution and September's focus will be Environmental and Social Impact Assessment, Lamessa elaborated.

It is to be recalled that Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) initiated a campaign to combat environment pollution and transfer clean and prosperous country for the next generation with the active involvement of the community.



AU's peace, security council stages 20th anniversary photo Exhibition

ADDIS ABABA (ENA) -The Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union organized an exhibition at its headquarters in Addis Ababa yesterday in commemorating its 20th Anniversary.

Various officials of the AU were present at the exhibition including Bankole Adeoye, AU Commissioner for Political Affairs Peace and Security.

The exhibition, that depicts humanitarian, peace, and security activities of the council, is part of a series of activities and PSC sessions scheduled from March to December 2024, aimed at assessing the Council's evolution and its discharge of mandate.

The exhibition aims to showcase the African Union Commission's Humanitarian Action

efforts on the continent.

It has created an opportunity for humanitarian agencies to highlight their work in the continent.

Over the years, the PSC has engaged and partnered with various stakeholders to prevent, manage, and resolve conflicts, as well as to address humanitarian situations, according to information obtained from the AU.

In this month of May, the 20th anniversary of the official launch of the Peace and Security Council is being commemorated by various events until December 2024.

Throughout the month the significant strides made by the Council for the past 20 years in promoting peace, security and stability across Africa will be reflected, the statement issued

by the council stated.

The commemoration will run throughout the whole year of 2024, but the month of May, being the month in which the PSC was officially launched will have the grand activities with the active participation of all AU Member States, AU Organs, Regional Economic Communities/ Regional Mechanisms for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution (RECs/RMs), Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), think tanks, academic institutions, as well as bilateral and multilateral partners.

The celebration presents a unique opportunity for the Council to assess its accomplishments and the challenges faced over the past two decades in discharging its mandate of promoting peace, security and stability in Africa.

News

Education reform to boost competency in manufacturing industry

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

ADDIS ABABA –The national reform in education would greatly contribute for the development of manufacturing sector through nurturing professionals and conducting problem-solving researches, Education Minister said.

Speaking at the Made in Ethiopia Expo on Sunday, Education Minister Prof. Birhanu Nega stated that as part of the education sector reform, efforts are underway to bring education institutions to become center of knowledge to support national economy including the manufacturing sector.

The education sector reform would greatly contributed for the success of the manufacturing industry through creating skilled manpower and conducting experimental researches, he stressed.

For this reason, Berhanu said the ministry has been focusing on ensuring quality of education in which problem-solving researches conducted to support the advancement of the production sector.

Moreover, he noted, it needs strengthening industry-university linkage as well as improving budget allocation for research and study activities to boost the competence and productivity of local manufacturers.



According to the Minister, the competitiveness of manufacturing industry requires support from the government, private sectors and other stakeholders.

For his part, Industry Minister Melaku Albel said that coordinated efforts have been underway to improve industry sector production capacity. Working in collaboration with education institutions is mandatory to boost sector's production capacity and competitiveness.

He called on education sector institutions to be exemplary by purchasing locally produced education materials including school uniforms, bags and shoes.

Gov't raises over...

on the Sunday for the Clean Ethiopia initiative.

The digital telethon with a target to obtain 50,000,000 Birr in 10 hours started at 8:00 AM and concluded at 6:00 PM.

Prime Minister's Press Secretariat Head Billene Seyum, stated that some 154,000,000 Birr was collected in a single day through the digital telethon.

She mentioned that the Ethiopian Commercial Bank has donated 23,000,000 Birr apart from promising to contribute more.

She also recalled that the employees of MIDROC Investment Group and its affiliated companies donated 64,000,000 Birr.

She indicated that 40,533 people took part in the digital telethon.

in his message through social media platform, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) thanked those participated in the telethon.

Athletes, sportspersons and fans who have made Ethiopia proud, regular taxi drivers, intellectuals, investors were thanked for their contribution during the digital telethon.

It was learnt that the contribution of over 40,000 citizens who partaken in the digital telethon from all over the world would be remembered through the construction of public toilets in every area.

WMO African conference...

According to Fetene, ministers from each member state will discuss political affairs related to world meteorological issues as service provision methods need political backing.

In this discussion, continental meteorological interventions including the early warning preparation systems will be adopted and the collaboration with partners working on climate issues is also another agenda. "Data may not be equally accessed in all areas, so; enhancing data distribution is one of key priorities of WMO and the Association as well. Every country is considered to be on the same page, not behind or left," he remarked.

WMO Regional Office for Africa Director Agnes Kijazi (PhD) for her part said that the accessibility of meteorological data needs to be improved. To this end, the WMO will support countries based on collective

decisions of member states in consideration of meteorological affairs.

The role of WMO is supplementing the counties' efficiency to generate and distribute meteorological data, not to intervene in their tasks. Strengthening countries' observation networks is the major agenda of the organization.

Kijazi (PhD) further noted that the association is working on how each country should address data distribution challenges. Each country is considered to have almost the same data sources and the WMO has a platform to support countries to access the technologies that generate forecasts equally.

The WMO has six major regional associations in which Africa is categorized under Association I. The current session of the Association I is taking place online and will be concluded on 15 May, it was learned.

'Prime time to build bridges...

the communities in the state to maintain their freedom, brotherhood and mutual respect to help craft a common great nation that deliver and meet livelihoods at a required level.

The premier said: "It is also highly valuable to craft bridges that are not only constructed with physical constituents but also a bridge that is built on our common narrations that shapes false narrations, fortifies social cohesion and transcend regional boundaries among the entire fellow citizens."

Acclaiming the leaders in the governance who have been the forefront actors behind the immense finalized projects, Abiy reiterated that the Abay Bridge is a showcase that testifies the leadership's firm commitment towards a prosperous shared future.

Apart from the importance of the bridge for promoting business, tourism, investment

and other development activities, it will be a showcase to our determination of detaching from fixed mindsets and unsubstantiated narratives, he noted.

Moreover, the great people in the state need to work in a higher sense of enthusiasm to ensure eternal peace and get rid of absolute poverty and hunger.

Reaffirming his sincere commitment to cooperation in all peace and development endeavors, the premier called on the community, armed groups and concerned bodies to get aside the regional leadership and develop regional development, ensuring peace among many other aspirations.

Stretching 380 meters in length and 43 meters in width, the bridge features lanes for cyclists and pedestrians. Besides, it accommodates six vehicles at a time and believed to alleviate traffic congestion in the city, it was learnt.

Tokyo University desirous of...

quite important for us to partner with such prestigious entity. I hope that we should establish a good relationship and friendship with AAU based on long term trust."

According to the VP, the similarities in cultural fabric of the people of Ethiopia and Japan make situations easier for Tokyo University to foster a relationship with AAU. "Globalization is important for both countries and we need to act together."

"The University of Tokyo is hosting four students coming from Ethiopia and they are really excellent and highly motivated. "We want to see more Ethiopia and the good thing is there is direct flight from Addis Ababa and Tokyo."

Prof. Takao also noted that each university has its own strength in solving global and local problems and it strongly depends on target topics. One of the pressing problems of Japan is the aging of society. The number of the young generation is starting to decrease very rapidly and the population started decreasing. There is a need to work outside of Japan and the university wants

to diversify the students and also faculty members."

He added, "We are interested in creating the new startup and we want our one company who is actively working in Africa to be expanded and to see five more startups, ten startups and hundred startups. So to realize such a situation, we want to work with the African start-up ecosystem including universities. Startup is a wonderful thing that is changing the world and an efficient way to encourage and empower young people."

Very recently, a lecture series was organized by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) in collaboration with AAU. At the event, Prof. Takao presented the research paper under the title 'Startup Ecosystem Development Experiences and Lessons from Japan.' The scholar also delivered his social implementation of organic electronics like 'Electronic Skins' and the next generation wearable worldwide and shared his expertise and experience with AAU students, lecturers and other members of the academia.

Opinion

Social media utilization should be responsible, accountable

BY MENGESHA AMARE

Most definitely, utilization of social media all depends on the user at the end. Sharing information is as old as human interaction and communal life and the pace of change is alarmingly accelerating these days. In the era of globalization and interconnection through science and technology, social media is everywhere though its manipulation matters.

Yes, the 21st century is deemed to be dynamic and technically advancing in terms of various parameters. Surprisingly, social media is now considered to be the most important part of peoples' lives across the globe. Thousands, millions, and billions have been employing social media as a good source of knowledge, but there are serious limitations along this line. Though the technology has changed the way people live, work and socializes, it has also attracted some negative social, economic and political repercussions.

For instance, in some circumstances, there are social media operators like youtubers have been forwarding unethical and even immoral messages that can potentially widen the disparity between/among citizens. What social media utilizes and these YouTube's are right now sending messages to Ethiopians are a case in point in this regard. Residing abroad and relatively leading a comfortable life, many are heard of beating war drums in their mother land for the intent to quench their thirst and reaping undeserved benefit and happiness at the expense of the poor fellow citizenry who are innocently listen to their mere propaganda.

To the worst, even many have opened fake social media accounts and add fuel to fire and further aggravate skirmishes and conflicts so as to snatch the wellbeing and peace of local community. Here, the government has to take appropriate measures against these elements who are working to disrupt the normal way of running activities across the nation merely to garner personal gain.

By recognizing how fake information through social media and opening fake accounts can throw a wrench in citizens' vibes, it is quite important to well identify and take apt steps against these operators. As human beings ride the wave of the digital age, it's super important for social media bigwigs to step up and address these snags and raise awareness of social media actors to properly utilize all sorts of social media.

It is well recognized that various platforms of social media including X formerly Twitter, Facebook, Wikipedia, YouTube, Snapchat, Instagram, LinkedIn, Pinterest, Blogs, among others, are in a wider use. These networks allow users, be they are students, working professionals, scientists or others who use them to connect with other people of the same access and interest

and stay updated about their fields.

The social media platforms have become news sources, sources of business start up patters, facilitators of real connection with people, revealing reality, having a great influence. Along with the good comes the bad. With all of its benefits, the nature of social media presents a range of potential issues. Yes, social media itself is not the problem. It is the way people use and manipulate it in place of actual communication and in-person socializing.

The best practices of social media include establishing social media policies that set expectations for appropriate employee social behavior. Unequivocally, information and communication technology has been changed rapidly over the past many years, with a key development being the emergence of social media.

While social media activism brings an increased awareness about societal issues, questions remain as to whether this awareness is translating into real change. Some argue that social sharing has encouraged people to use computers and mobile phones to express their concerns on social issues without actually having to engage actively with campaigns in real life.

Interestingly, although social sharing has become the norm rather than the exception in business, some companies, after experiencing first-hand of some adverse effects of social media, have decided to go against the grain and remove the social sharing buttons from their websites. Social Media is relatively a newer technology; hence, it is a little difficult to establish its long-term good and bad consequences. Social media is of paramount importance in staying people informed about events happening across the globe or in other people's lives using various forms. In contrast to television, radio, or newspapers, social media lets everyone convey information accurately by presenting the real picture. It aids in showcasing real-world news across the universe thanks to the advent of science and technology. People have become more conscious since serves as a channel for information, thus paving the way to innovation and success via developing their knowledge and abilities.

As far as the constructive side is concerned, social media has revolutionized the way people communicate and connect with each other/one another. It has brought people from all over the world closer together, facilitated the spread of information and knowledge, and given a voice to those who may not have had one otherwise. It has also enabled social and political movements to organize and spread their messages, and has given individuals and groups a platform to promote causes and ideas they are passionate about.

However, social media can also be destructive, as the ease of sharing and spreading information can lead to the spread of misinformation and fake news.

The anonymity of social media can also embolden people to engage in cyberbullying and harassment, and contribute to the spread of hate speech and intolerance. Furthermore, social media addiction can have negative effects on mental health, with excessive use leading to anxiety, depression, and other mental health issues. No doubt, while social media has many benefits and has made a positive impact on society in many ways, it is important to be aware of its potential negative effects and to use it responsibly. Ultimately, the impact of social media depends on how it is used and how we, as individuals choose to engage with it.

Hence the way people, predominantly active users of social media, have to use the social media as properly as possible since the way they have employed the social media matters the most. The very important thing that needs to be taken into account is social media is the best platform to convey feelings and opinions - a song, a poem, a work of art, a decadent dessert, or anything else. Besides, anyone can let their creativity shine through the platform for it to be shared by millions of others, but they have to utilize these accounts and platforms for constructive facets as much as possible.

Social media brings these people together by linking them on a common platform. Thus, fostering a sense of unity facilitates the development of community links. Yes, despite having such unique advantages, social media is considered to be one of the most harmful elements of society. If the use of social media is not monitored, it can lead to grave consequences. It is harmful because it invades peoples' privacy like never before.

True, the social media advantage helps users in numerous ways as it is of paramount importance in getting to know audiences, providing better customer service, gaining invaluable customer insights, understanding brand perception better, among others. A direct connection with users' audiences of social media users is a great way to improve the overall marketing campaign. Social media is an internet-based form of communication. Social media platforms allow users to have conversations, share information and create web content.

Social media is digital technology that allows the sharing of ideas and information, including text and visuals, through virtual networks and communities, Social media typically features user-generated content that lends itself to engagement via likes, shares, comments, and discussion, Social media is credited with helping people build community and faulted for facilitating disinformation and hate speech, Social media is also an increasingly important part of many companies' marketing campaigns.

Social media is a collective term for websites and applications that focus on communication, community-based input, interaction, content-sharing and

collaboration. People use social media to stay in touch and interact with friends, family and various communities. The negative effects of social media necessitate a balanced approach to its use. Individuals must be mindful of their online habits and set boundaries to protect their mental health and privacy.

To counteract the negative effects of social media, it's essential to adopt healthier usage habits that safeguard mental health and foster genuine connections. Here are several tips that can help minimize the negative effects of social media and promote a more positive online experience.

False information can lead the education system to failure; in an organization, wrong advertisements will affect productivity; social media can abuse society by invading on people's privacy; some useless blogs can influence youth to become violent and take inappropriate actions. Use of social media is beneficial but should be used in a limited way without getting addicted.

The result of negative intentions and false information through social media lead to social isolation and this can cause several effects such as physical, emotional, mental and psychological issues on youths. This can lead to depression, anxiety, and many other problems.

However, excessive use of social media can also have negative effects. These negative impacts including distraction and loss of productivity, the spread of false misinformation, compromise of privacy and data vulnerabilities, the promotion of superficial connections, social media addiction, enabling bullying and harassment, promoting social isolation, causing depression and anxiety, promoting obsessive self-presentation, and helping spread scams and frauds, among others. Plus, excessive social media use without reasonable controls can propagate misinformation, compromise privacy, reduce productivity, and negatively impact mental health. Hence, it is vital to use social media platforms in moderation by following time limits, disabling notifications, assessing the credibility of information, and focusing more on real-life relationships.

In sum, the advantages of social media outweigh the disadvantages when used responsibly. Users must establish self-discipline by being mindful of time spent, safeguarding personal data and verifying information sourced from social platforms. The government needs to take appropriate steps against those who are fond of transmitting false information, fake news via opening fake accounts to promote peace and security in the country. Social media has had both advantages and disadvantages. However, it all depends on the user at the end.

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

Editorial

Beyond majestic look

As a headquarter of the AU, United Nations Economic Commission for Africa and a seat for international organizations and diplomatic communities, Addis Ababa (meaning New Flower) has to be made modern as its name bespeaks.

No one can argue against the idea that the growth of Addis Ababa has to align with its international status by fostering, of course, greenery development, state-of-the-art infrastructural edifice and getting it have modern boulevards and clean and attractive environments here and there.

Since it is advancing towards being world standard metropolitan city, a number of crucial undertakings have been carried out. The national projects like 'Dine for Sheger,' 'Dine for Ethiopia', 'Addis Development Corridor' and other national actions have been bearing fruits. Vividly, Ethiopia is practically undertaking new model of African projects and building world standard lodges thereby making the nation hub of tourists and a livable spot. For example, the latest corridor development project is a continuation of reform plans to transform Addis into a smart and modern city by enlivening uncared for urban localities.

Projects incorporating the construction of bicycle routes, spacious pedestrian walkways, better roads, parks, libraries, and additional housing are being built to help Addis make its vision a reality. The projects definitely aim at upgrading the outdated drainage systems, advancing utility networks such as power and internet. Such invaluable moves would be of paramount importance in improving the quality of life in the city apart from booming capital's capacity of attracting a number of regional, continental and even international tourists.

The commitment of the city administration and the federal government to transform Addis Ababa into a mesmerizing, hospitable, inhabitable and stable for its citizens is worth appreciating, indeed!

Needless to state, it is widely heralded that the goal of the corridor development is making Addis Ababa beautiful and uplift its residents. Yes, improving Addis Ababa keeping historical sites and making its residents the beneficiaries of economic development needs to be well embarked on.

There are also projects undertaken to keep the capital green and tidy sanitation wise. That is why it is repeatedly stated that the ongoing corridor development project in the capital is set to significantly enhance the city's green coverage and help its rapidly growing population meet the increased demand for infrastructure development, sanitation and overcome the longstanding challenges.

The projects not only do address the community's infrastructure needs but they also make over and push capitals' overall appearance and aesthetics steps forward.

In order to modernize the city and make it convenient for its residents, the city administration has designed and worked on a corridor development project. The provision of adequate money and land compensation is being prepared and paid for those who are locally displaced for the same cause. The government is thus working from dawn to dusk with the help of high caliber professionals to meet two ends: keeping the capital neatness and making it quite catchy, and attracting a number of tourists from all over the world.

The project is part and parcel of making Addis Ababa a beautiful metropolitan city. With such a vision, the corridor and reconstruction development works have been carried out as per the pledge of the incumbent government. Among the development works that have been done so far are there the constructions of the municipal office, Masqal Square, Friendship and Unity Park, the Science Museum, the Abrihot Library, Pushkin Square, Gotera Akaki Bole Road, among others.

The ongoing road corridor development has made a significant contribution to preventing the risks associated with housing density, thinness of roads, overlapping of power lines, and blockage of drainage pipes.

In sum, the entire projects will allow houses to be built according to the plan, roads to be widened, modern electricity lines to be laid, and drainage pipes to be built keeping the required quality. It is also believed to be a permanent solution would be devised to save many slum areas from combustion, floods, traffic jam and other anticipated or capricious calamity.

Opinion

Clean roads, urban corridors to promote conference tourism

BY SOLOMON DIBABA

Conference tourism is not just about attending meetings and going back home. There is far more to it.

Conference tourism, also known as business tourism or MICE tourism (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions), refers to the travel and hospitality sector that focuses on organizing and hosting conferences, conventions, trade shows, seminars, and other business-related events.

This includes small-scale gatherings such as board meetings, seminars, workshops, and training sessions. These meetings are usually attended by professionals, academics, or members of specific organizations across the world conducted in a specific venue in a country. There are several types and forms of conference tourism.

Incentive travel involves organizing trips or events as rewards or incentives for employees, clients, or partners constitute one form of conference tourism. These may include corporate retreats, team-building activities, or incentive trips to exotic destinations.

Conferences are larger events where experts, professionals, and stakeholders convene to discuss specific topics, share research findings, and network with peers. Conferences may be academic, scientific, industry-specific, or general business conferences.

Exhibitions, trade shows, and conventions provide a platform for businesses, organizations, and industries to showcase their products, services, innovations, and expertise to a targeted audience make up one type of conference tourism. Attendees can explore exhibition booths, attend product demonstrations, and engage in business-to-business networking. Although not well developed, such events have been staged in Ethiopia for several decades.

Conference tourism contributes to Ethiopia's economic development by attracting business travelers, generating revenue for local businesses, hotels, restaurants, and service providers, and stimulating investment in conference facilities and infrastructure. It also fosters knowledge exchange, innovation, and collaboration across industries and sectors, driving professional development, research, and industry growth.

For destinations, conference tourism offers an opportunity to diversify their tourism offerings, extend the tourism season beyond traditional peak periods, and attract high-spending visitors who contribute to the local economy. It also enhances the destination's reputation as a hub for business, innovation, and intellectual exchange, positioning it competitively in the global tourism market.

Ethiopia possesses a number of national events and historical sites some of which are registered at UNESCO and can be used for conference tourism attendants who could visit these sites

The country is home to ancient civilizations, with UNESCO World Heritage Sites such as Lalibela's rock-hewn churches, Axum's obelisks and ruins, and Gondar's royal

castles. These historical sites attract tourists interested in exploring Ethiopia's rich history and architectural marvels.

Ethiopia is a deeply religious country, with a strong Christian Orthodox tradition dating back to the early centuries of Christianity. Pilgrims and tourists visit religious sites such as the Debre Libanos Monastery, the Yemrehanna Kristos Church, and the churches of Tigray, Sof Omer, Al-Nejashi Mosques to experience Ethiopia's spiritual heritage.

The nation celebrates numerous cultural festivals throughout the year, offering visitors the opportunity to experience traditional music, dance, food, and rituals. Festivals like Timkat (Epiphany), Meskel (Finding of the True Cross), and Irreecha (Oromo Thanksgiving), Fitcha Chambalala, (Sidama people's New Year) showcase the country's vibrant cultural diversity.

Ethiopia is home to over 80 ethnic groups, each with its own distinct language, customs, and traditions. Cultural tourism initiatives can highlight the unique lifestyles, crafts, cuisines, and ceremonies of various ethnic communities, such as the Oromo, Amhara, Tigray, and Sidama.

The country has a rich tradition of craftsmanship, with artisans producing intricate textiles, pottery, basketry, and jewelry using traditional techniques. Visitors can explore craft markets, workshops, and cultural centers to learn about Ethiopia's artisanal heritage and purchase locally made souvenirs.

Ethiopia offers opportunities for cultural tours along historic trade routes, pilgrimage trails, and ancient caravan paths. Routes like the Historic Route (connecting Bahir Dar, Gondar, Axum, and Lalibela), the Rift Valley Trail, and the Simien Mountains Trek provide immersive cultural experiences amid stunning landscapes.

Museums, galleries, and cultural institutions in Ethiopia preserve and showcase the country's cultural heritage. Visitors can explore institutions like the National Museum of Ethiopia in Addis Ababa, The Adwa Memorial Museum, the Ethnological Museum at Addis Ababa University, and regional museums to learn about Ethiopia's history, art, and culture.

Community-based tourism initiatives empower local communities to benefit from tourism by offering authentic cultural experiences. Visitors can participate in homestays, cultural exchanges, and community-led tours to engage with rural communities, support sustainable development, and experience Ethiopian hospitality firsthand.

By leveraging these cultural assets and promoting sustainable tourism practices, Ethiopia can enhance its appeal as a cultural tourism destination, attract a diverse range of visitors, and contribute to economic development, cultural preservation, and community empowerment across the country. Those who attend special international conferences organized in Addis Ababa and regional towns will have the opportunity to visit and above mentioned tourist sites and events celebrated in the country.

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



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Office of the CEO

Tel. 011-126-42-22

Fax. 251-011-156-98-62

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Department

email: etpresspromotion@gmail.com

Tel. 011-156-98-73/011-811-13-15

Telegram :- 0976084707 - press

Editor-in-Chief: Worku Belachew

email- workubelachew@press.et

Address- Nifas Silk Lafto Sub-city

Woreda - 05, House No----

Tel- +251 111 26 41 98

Managing Editor: Wakuman Kudama

Email: wakuma220@gmail.com

Deputy Editors-in-Chief:

Alem Hailu

Elizabeth Mengistu

Zekarias Woldemariam

Desta Geberehiwot

Daniel Beyene

Website: www.press.et

email: ethiopianherald@press.et

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The Ethiopian Herald

Business & Economy

Ethiopian tea exports: Steaming success story

BY LAKACHEW ATINAFU

Ethiopia, often referred to as the birthplace of coffee, is renowned for its rich agricultural heritage. However, in recent years, another beverage, Ethiopian tea, has been gaining prominence in international markets, according to information gained from the Ethiopian Coffee and Tea Authority.

With its unique flavor profiles and exceptional quality, Ethiopian tea has emerged as a rising star in the global tea industry. The Authority announced that more than 815.6 tons of tea products have been produced in the nine months of this fiscal year. Deputy Director General of the Authority, Shafi Umer told especially to the Ethiopian Press Agency; in the nine months of 2023/24 fiscal year, 815.6 tons of properly prepared tea products were sent to the foreign market, earning 1.67 million Dollars.

Ethiopian tea exports have experienced a steady upward trajectory, reflecting the growing demand for premium teas worldwide. According to recent data, tea exports from Ethiopia have increased significantly.

Recalling that the exported tea production is 204 tons more than last year; the Deputy Director explained that since the investors involved in tea production are limited, East Africa Holding and Gumero Tea are currently supplying the product.

The Deputy General Director said that a committee has been set up so that the regions can work extensively on tea development. He stated that the tea processing is being widely worked on especially, in Jimma, Ilubabur and Buno Bedele zones of Oromia region. He also pointed out that efforts are being made for farmers in the South West region of Ethiopia to produce tea on a large scale.

The tea industry in Ethiopia has witnessed remarkable growth in recent years. The country's favorable climate, with high altitudes and ample rainfall, provides ideal conditions for tea cultivation. Ethiopia's diverse ecosystems offer a range of tea varieties, including black, green, and herbal teas, each with its distinct characteristics and flavors.

Ethiopian tea has found a receptive audience in various international markets. The European Union (EU) countries, including Germany, the United Kingdom, and the Netherlands, are among the largest importers of Ethiopian tea. These countries value the unique taste and high-quality standards of Ethiopian tea, making it a popular choice among discerning tea enthusiasts.

Ethiopia has also made notable inroads into the North American market, particularly the United States and Canada. The demand for organic and specialty teas has been growing steadily in these regions, and Ethiopian teas, with their organic cultivation practices and distinctive flavors, have gained traction



Ethiopia, a notable tea exporter, earned an impressive foreign currency

among health-conscious consumers.

Ethiopian teas are known for their exceptional quality and unique flavor profiles, which are a result of the country's favorable climate and meticulous cultivation practices. The diverse range of teas, including the renowned Ethiopian black teas and herbal infusions, caters to a wide array of consumer preferences.

Ethiopia's tea industry has embraced sustainable and organic cultivation practices, resonating with the growing global demand for environmentally friendly products. Small holder farmers, who constitute a significant portion of the tea production sector, have been encouraged to adopt organic farming methods, ensuring the purity and natural goodness of Ethiopian teas.

The Ethiopian government has played a crucial role in promoting the tea industry and supporting tea growers and exporters. Initiatives aimed at improving infrastructure, enhancing production capabilities, and facilitating market access have been implemented, fostering a business environment conducive for tea exporters.

Ethiopian teas have garnered international accolades, further boosting their reputation and market appeal. The recognition received at prestigious tea competitions and exhibitions has helped create awareness and demand for Ethiopian teas in global markets.

While Ethiopian tea exports have been flourishing, challenges remain on the horizon. These challenges include increasing competition from other tea-producing countries, logistics and transportation constraints, and the need for continuous quality control measures to meet international standards. However, with sustained efforts and strategic interventions, the future of Ethiopian tea exports looks promising. There is immense potential for further growth, particularly in emerging markets and through value-added products such as specialty blends and herbal infusions.

The success story of Ethiopian tea exports is

a testament to the country's rich tea heritage, commitment to quality, and sustainable cultivation practices. As Ethiopian teas continue to captivate global tea connoisseurs with their exceptional flavors and unique character, the industry is poised for further expansion. With the right support and a focus on innovation, Ethiopian tea is set to establish itself as a prominent player in the global tea market, enriching the reputation of Ethiopia as a producer of exceptional agricultural products.

Ethiopia should identify suitable areas for tea cultivation and consider expanding the cultivable land dedicated to mild stimulant crops. This may involve land surveys, soil analysis, and feasibility studies to determine the most suitable regions for cultivation.

Implementing modern and efficient agricultural practices can enhance productivity and quality. This includes using appropriate fertilizers, irrigation systems, and pest management strategies. Training programs and technical support for farmers can also be provided to improve their knowledge and skills.

Investing in research and development activities related to tea and mild stimulant crops can lead to the development of new varieties that are better suited to local conditions, have higher yields, and improved resistance to pests and diseases. This can be done through collaborations with agricultural research institutions and universities.

Ethiopia should focus on value addition and processing of tea and mild stimulant crops to increase their market value. This can involve establishing processing facilities such as tea factories or processing units for other mild stimulant crops. Processing can include activities like drying, sorting, packaging, and branding to meet international quality standards.

Ethiopia needs to actively promote its tea and mild stimulant crops in both domestic and international markets. This can be achieved

by participating in trade fairs, organizing promotional events, and engaging in targeted marketing campaigns. Strengthening trade relationships with potential buyers and exploring export opportunities can also boost income generation. Adequate infrastructure, including transportation networks, storage facilities, and marketplaces, is crucial for the efficient supply chain and timely delivery of tea and mild stimulant crops. Investments in infrastructure development can reduce post-harvest losses and improve market access for farmers.

Providing training and capacity-building programs to farmers and encouraging the formation of farmer cooperatives can enhance their knowledge, bargaining power, and access to inputs, credit facilities, and markets. Cooperative societies can also pool resources for collective marketing, bulk purchasing, and value addition.

Establishing a favorable regulatory framework is essential to support the tea and mild stimulant crop sector. This includes clear guidelines on cultivation practices, quality standards, certification processes, and fair trade practices. It is important to ensure compliance with international standards and certifications to access premium markets.

Besides tea, Ethiopia can explore diversification into other mild stimulant crops such as coffee, mate, guayusa, or herbal teas. Diversification can help mitigate risks associated with dependency on a single crop and tap into different market segments.

Emphasizing sustainable agricultural practices and promoting organic production methods can enhance the marketability of Ethiopian tea and mild stimulant crops. Growing consumer demand for organic and sustainably produced products can create additional income opportunities.

By implementing these strategies, Ethiopia can enhance its income generation potential from tea and other mild stimulant crops, stimulate rural development, and contribute to the country's economic growth.

In the Sphere of Diplomacy

A partnership through thick, thin

BY EYUEL KIFLU

United States is one of the foremost countries to open its consular in Ethiopia. The two countries have a long history of diplomatic relations that dates back to the early days of both nations. They first established formal diplomatic ties in 1903, following the signing of a Treaty of Commerce by Emperor Menelik II and US Representative Robert P. Skinner.

Over the years, Ethiopia and the US have collaborated on various issues, including economic development, security cooperation, and humanitarian assistance. The US has been a key partner in helping Ethiopia address challenges such as poverty, food insecurity, and conflict.

In recent years, Ethiopia has emerged as an important strategic partner for the US in East Africa. The two countries have worked together on counterterrorism efforts, peacekeeping missions, and regional stability initiatives. Ethiopia's role as a key player in the Horn of Africa has made it an important ally for the US in promoting peace and security in the region.

To commemorate over a century of relations between Addis Ababa and Washington, a photo exhibition was recently held at the National Museum in Addis Ababa. The exhibition promises to showcase a captivating array of photographs depicting the longstanding bilateral relationship between the two countries.

US Ambassador to Ethiopia, Ervin Massinga, stated on the occasion that the exhibition serves as a testament to the enduring ties between the two nations. He emphasized the significance of the selected photographs in celebrating the milestones and connections between the US and Ethiopia in various sectors such as health, education, agriculture, and economic development. Each image serves as a reminder of the strong, resilient, long-term bonds that unite the two countries.

Tourism State Minister Sileshi Girma, on his part, remarked that the photo exhibit showcases captivating images that capture key moments in the long and thriving relations between Ethiopia and the United States. The exhibit also marks a continuation of the 120th-anniversary celebration of the start of bilateral relations between the two countries.

Today, Ethiopia is one of the United States' closest allies in Sub-Saharan Africa, according to the state minister. The countries collaborate in various areas of cooperation, including economic development, security, healthcare, and education, among others. Additionally, Sileshi stated that the cultural and people-to-people ties between Ethiopia and the United States are also growing.

Despite these strong ties, Ethiopia-US relations have faced challenges over the years. Issues such as human rights abuses, political repression, and governance problems have strained the relationship at times. This strain was particularly evident during the northern Ethiopia conflict. However, Ethiopia has taken significant measures to address the conflict, including pursuing peace agreements, transitional justice, national dialogue, and on-going talks with the militants.

The US has imposed some suspensions on Ethiopia, such as the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), despite the latter's efforts for democracy and stability in the country. In this regard, it is important for the US to consider the long-standing relationship between the two countries and the improvements made on Ethiopia's side, and reconsider the opportunities provided by AGOA.

Discussions between the two sides are on-going regarding Ethiopia's potential reinstatement to the AGOA program. Recently, Ethiopia's Ambassador to the U.S., Ambassador Sileshi Bekele (PhD. Eng), engaged in talks with various members of the U.S. Congress on AGOA and contemporary issues related to Ethiopia.

Ambassador Sileshi, on his X page, mentioned that he discussed issues related to AGOA, possible partnerships, Ethiopia's economic development, potential partnerships, humanitarian support, access to food, the implementation of peace agreements, and ethnically-related conflicts in some parts of Ethiopia with Rep. John Garamendi.

Similarly, he discussed the impact of AGOA exclusion on Ethiopia, including job losses and its effect on American investors and livelihoods, with Cherfilus-McCormick, another member of the U.S. Congress.

Moreover, the ambassador discussed on-going ethnic conflicts and the disorganization of certain groups, which are affecting the stability and development of Ethiopia, with members of the Congress. He also highlighted the impact of AGOA on low-income citizens and American investors.

In addition, the ambassador held discussions with Congress member Ami Bara concerning peace agreement implementation, including the approval of Transitional Justice Policy, humanitarian support for people in need and refugees, the significance of AGOA for U.S.-Ethiopia business relations, and Horn of Africa peace, among other topics.

It is worth noting that as of January 1, 2022, Ethiopia's eligibility for trade benefits under the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) has been suspended due to concerns over the country's human rights record. The decision was made by the United States



Ethiopia has long been a key ally for the United States in the fight against terrorism, particularly in the volatile region of the Horn of Africa

officials have pledged to work towards improving human rights conditions in the country. They have also expressed hope that Ethiopia will be reinstated as an AGOA beneficiary in the future. However, despite roundtable discussions on the issues, there have been no significant changes. It is also known that disputes persist in different parts of the country. Nevertheless, the government has demonstrated its commitment by engaging in discussions with militants and implementing national dialogue, transitional justice, and other mechanisms to achieve national consensus and compensate the victims of the conflict.

As Ethiopia continues to navigate its path towards democracy and development, its relationship with the United States will remain crucial. Both countries share a commitment to promoting peace, stability, and prosperity in East Africa and beyond.

Ethiopia has long been a key ally for the United States in the fight against terrorism, particularly in the volatile region of the Horn of Africa. The two countries have worked together to combat threats from groups like Al-Shabab.

According to the US Department of State, terrorist organizations continue to pose a significant threat to both countries and their allies. Through diplomatic engagement and foreign assistance, the Department of State is working with countries and other partners to build capabilities that will help prevent, detect, and respond to terrorist threats.

As these threats evolve, it is crucial for Ethiopia and the US to maintain their partnership in order to prevent attacks and ensure regional stability.

The region remains a hub for terrorism, human trafficking, piracy, and other security challenges. It is imperative that Ethiopia and the US continue their efforts to combat these threats in order to maintain peace and stability in the Horn of Africa.

Trade Representative (USTR) after a review of Ethiopia's compliance with AGOA's eligibility criteria. The suspension followed the conclusion of the two-year-long northern Ethiopian conflict by the Pretoria peace agreement.

In response to the suspension, Ethiopian

Law & Politics



A longstanding resolve towards global peace

BY STAFF REPORTER

Ethiopia has been standing shoulder high in peacekeeping diplomacy also known as military diplomacy. From Korea to Somalia, Ethiopians have sacrificed their lives for the peace and stability of other countries. The country which stands as a sovereign and independent nation in Africa has been central to global peace. Its resolve towards international peace has been the same under any form of government. From the Imperial regime to the incumbent, Ethiopia maintained the same position in helping pacify conflict-ridden nations near or far. Last week, the country marked the 73rd anniversary of Ethiopia's participation in the Korean peacekeeping mission.

Speaking at the occasion, Foreign Affairs Minister Taye Atskeselassie said the valor Ethiopia's Kagnew Battalion Force showed in Korea in its peacekeeping mission demonstrates the commitment of Ethiopia to ensuring global peace.

FM Taye said "We have to honor the veterans who had participated in the peacekeeping mission and document their stories. Ethiopia's contribution toward ensuring Korea's peace has consolidated the relationships between the two countries.

The contribution of Ethiopia at the time also showed the virtue of our people, he added, ENA reported.

South Korean Ambassador to Ethiopia Jung Kang said on his part that the price Ethiopia paid for Korea's peace is unforgettable.

The ambassador noted that the price paid in blood has laid the foundation for the

strong bilateral relations between Ethiopia and Korea.

Families of Ethiopian Korean War veterans and other guests attended the commemoration organized by the Ethiopian Korean War Veterans Association.

Ethiopia, as a founding member of the League of Nations (later known as the United Nations), has actively worked towards the organization's objectives. The country's representation in the League of Nations was especially significant, as it stood as the only free African nation in a predominantly colonized continent, advocating for the interests of African people.

Being the founding member of the UN, and its substantial involvement in peacekeeping missions worldwide, such as in Korea, Liberia, Rwanda, Somalia, and other countries, Ethiopia has positioned itself as a critical contributor to global peace efforts.

According to a European Scientific Journal article entitled 'the Dynamics of Ethiopian Defense Diplomacy: A Focus on Peacekeeping Contributions' the country's peacekeeping engagements can be categorized into four phases. The first was the Imperial Army's peacekeeping deployment from 1950-1967. The second was the peacekeeping deployment of EPRDF's Rebel Army from 1994-95. The third was the Ethiopian National Defense Force (ENDF) engagement in 'African Solution for African Problems' from 2003- 2010. The fourth and last phase is since 2011 when ENDF became 'the peacekeeper army' (Sigatu, 2021).

During Emperor Haile Selassie I, Ethiopia's first notable participation in UN peacekeeping was the Republic of the Congo in 1960. However, under Resolution

84 (1950), the United Nations Security Council recommended that all member states provide military forces under the United States' command using the United Nations flag for operations against North Korean forces (United Nations, 1950). Ethiopia provided 6,037 troops in rounds of battalions made up of volunteers from Emperor Haile Selassie's Imperial Guard from 1951 to 1954 to the United Nations Command (UNC) in Korea.

With the same motivation, the Imperial government of Ethiopia deployed its peacekeeping troops to the Republic of the Congo in the United Nations Operation in the Congo, ONUC (Opération des Nations Unies au Congo) from 1960 – 1964. In addition, the India-Pakistan border in the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP) in 1966. Ethiopia Contributed a total of 10, 625 of which 6,911 contingents, 2,960 Junior Officers, and 754 Officers in four rotations to ONUC and seven officers to UNMOGIP.

The Ethiopian experience is one of few instances indicating the significance of peacekeeping participation as a tool of defense diplomacy, especially from 1994 onwards. After the change of government in 1991, the new government participated in United Nations peacekeeping missions after more than two decades of interruption. After the Rwandan genocide, the United Nations deployed the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR), in which Ethiopia deployed 1,694 troops from 1994 to 1995

Later, in July 2009, on the Rwandan Liberation Day, President Paul Kagame of Rwanda presented to the late Meles Zenawi, the Prime Minister of Ethiopia, with "URUTI" (National Liberation Medal) and "UMURUNZI" (Campaign

against Genocide Medal). The first medal recognized Meles's contribution to toppling the former regime and bringing peace and socioeconomic development to Ethiopia. The second medal was given in recognition of Ethiopia's contribution to deploying peacekeepers to help Rwanda.

After the African Union was officially launched in July 2002, "African Solutions to Africa's Problems" became a principle that emphasized the importance of African countries taking the lead in addressing the challenges and conflicts within the continent (Solomon, 2015). This led to a series of African Union-led peacekeeping operations on the continent and has been the driver of the majority of diplomatic defense activities.

In 2003, the first mission was wholly initiated, planned, and executed by African Union members, the African Union Mission in Burundi (AMIB), and was deployed to Burundi (Murithi, 2008). In 2004, the UN Security Council established United Nations Peace Operations in Burundi (ONUB), and AMIB troops were incorporated into the ONUB.

In September 2003, the United Nations established the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) in Liberia. Likewise, after the Darfur crisis in Sudan, the AU set up a peacekeeping operation in 2004, the African Union Mission in Sudan. By 2007, the Security Council established the AU/UN Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) and incorporated AMIS personnel.

Furthermore, the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) was created by the African Union's Peace and Security Council in January 2007 with the approval of the United Nations. In April 2022, it transformed into the African Union Transitional Mission in Somalia (ATMIS).

Society

Transforming cities through creating clean, healthier env't

BY MENGISTEAB TESHOME

Living in a clean, healthy, safe and comfortable environment has a number of rewards and is vital for the overall health, physical and mental well-being of individual citizens aside from producing wide-ranging social, economic and environmental gains.

It is clear that proper sanitation and hygiene practices have a number of benefits such as maintaining good health, becoming productive and boosting safety and dignity. As a result, working to ensure cleanliness takes the epicenter in human activity.

According to health professionals, hygiene interventions implemented with 99 percent coverage would reduce diarrhea incidence by 30 percent, which would in turn lead to a 2.5 percent decrease in stunting. Investment of 3.35 USD on hand hygiene, 11 USD on latrine, 200 USD on water construction and many thousands USD on vaccines have equivalent health outcomes.

Taking that into account, these days, countries are taking various initiatives to develop and create clean and healthy cities that are more attractive, comfortable for all to lead a healthy lifestyle and experience an elevated quality of life.

Ethiopia is also flexing muscle to actualize this dream, creating a vibrant, clean and attractive city through employing various projects that could help it to qualify the set standards.

Lately, a nationwide 'Clean Ethiopia Initiative' was launched with the aim to promote a cleaner environment and healthier lifestyle for citizens as well as transform the appearances of cities in Ethiopia through expanding public sanitation infrastructure, promoting modern, hygienic, and inclusive restroom facilities across the nation's urban landscape.

The Initiative, as Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed stated, plans to construct modern, clean, and dignified public restrooms, with an active involvement of the people living at home and the Diaspora community.

"As we embark on this new initiative, I call upon all Ethiopians to contribute their share in creating cities that are conducive for everyone," the Premier wrote on his social media."

According to a press release from the PM Office and issued via the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, over the past six years, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed has spearheaded transformative efforts to ensure that Ethiopia's cities are clean, green, and conducive to residents' well-being.

Building on this momentum, Prime Minister Abiy has directed efforts towards cleaning and revitalizing the main corridors of the city. Currently, development activities are underway in five key corridors, with a focus on modernizing public amenities and enhancing overall urban livability,



according to the statement.

The initiative, named 'Clean Ethiopia,' includes a fundraising component under the theme 'Clean Cities – Healthy Lives,' aiming to solicit both cash and in-kind contributions for the construction of these public facilities. To showcase this initiative, a prototype has been constructed and prominently displayed within the city, providing a tangible example of the modern and dignified public toilets that will be implemented in the identified corridors.

The purpose of this initiative is threefold: Firstly, the construction of modern public toilets in the identified corridors aimed at enhancing accessibility and fostering cleanliness within Ethiopia's urban landscape. Secondly, by promoting a culture of dignified toilet usage and raising awareness about cleanliness, this initiative strives to elevate hygiene standards across the city and nation. Thirdly, on a broader scale, the initiative underscores the essential connection between urban sanitation and public health, serving as an educational platform to advocate for improved hygiene practices and overall well-being, the news release stated.

The statement goes on to say that Prime Minister Abiy's unwavering commitment to urban sanitation underscores his vision for a cleaner, healthier, and more vibrant urban landscape, reflecting a collective aspiration for a better quality of life for all residents.

To make the initiative a success, a public mobilization program- a digital telethon participation movement - was launched

nationwide.

Following the call, Ethiopian expats residing in the United States have provided in-kind and financial contributions to the 'Clean Ethiopia' initiative, according to the Ethiopian Embassy in Washington, D.C.

Speaking to the media, Ethiopia's Ambassador to the United States, Seleshi Bekele, in a virtual meeting held with members of the Diaspora community, has appreciated the great contributions they are making to the development of their home country.

"Clean Ethiopia movement aims at giving Addis Ababa, the capital of Ethiopia as well as the political capital of Africa, a green and clean facelift. Thus, it is worth supporting," he added.

He also urged the Ethiopian Diaspora and second-generation expats in the USA to support the initiative.

In fact, as the initiative is very beneficial and is worth supporting, it attracted a number of Ethiopians who are residing in the country and abroad including athletes, artists, investors, private and government organizations among others as well as foreigners living in the capital Addis Ababa. This was also testified at a fundraising program; a digital telethon program organized to collect 50 million birr and gained much more than the set target. As it was announced by the Office of the Prime Minister, 154 million and 500 thousand Birr has been collected through the digital telethon program in 10 hours.

While speaking in relation to the fundraising

program and the support gained, Prime Minister's Press Secretariat, Billene Seyoum said that 154 million 500 thousand Birr was collected in the digital telethon.

She said that 67.5 million Birr was collected directly from the community through the telethon. The Ethiopia Commercial Bank has donated 23 million Birr in accordance with the promises it made to add one million Birr to the 3 Birr each citizen contributes. In addition, the employees of MIDROC Investment Group; and companies under it, donated 64 million Birr. She also extended gratitude for the 40,533 people who took action in supporting the initiative.

Approached by The Ethiopian Herald Temesgen Takele, a resident of Addis Ababa Arat Kilo Sub City shared his insight regarding the Initiative. According to him, the initiative is an intriguing and timely move to bring about change and transform the features of the city. "I believe realizing the initiative plays a vital role in ensuring a clean and attractive city. Moreover, it helps to attract businesses and tourists, as well as investment which ultimately contribute to boost local job creation capacity."

The Initiative is commendable and it could yield meaningful impacts in ensuring decent residential areas. It can also bring communities together to create a clean and safe environment. It will also allow citizens to stand in unison to keep their environment clean. "I am sure through united endeavor; citizens sustain efforts and can address the problems related to hygiene and sanitation practices thereby preventing disease outbreaks and keeping children healthy," he opined.

International

The development of agricultural value chains as a launching pad of the partnership between China and the ECA in Cameroon

YAOUNDE (ECA) - "We are willing to open discussions on areas for cooperation with ECA. Agriculture is the solid foundation of any country's modernization, stability and prosperity. China attaches great importance to agriculture and the related value chains" said His Excellency Wang Yingwu, Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to Cameroon.

During the discussion He had with Jean Luc Mastaki, ECA Director for Central Africa, the Head of the Chinese Diplomatic Mission outlined the central place occupied by the agricultural development in cooperation with Cameroon: "Food products are strategic commodities. All developed countries attach great importance to agricultural value chains and support this sector". The current state of the world economy and recent international crises comfort the diplomat's views on the central place of the sector in the structural transformation process, given the food security concerns which have risen in Cameroon and the sub-region since the

outbreak of COVID19.

According to Wang Yingwu, for a successful agricultural value chain's development in Cameroon, there is an urgent need to develop a high-quality and climate-resilient seeds system, open up markets and guarantee competitive transport services, and resolve the land access issues.

The Sub-Regional Office for Central Africa of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa has carried out a number of analyzes on the agricultural sector in the sub-region. In the area of agro-processing, the study entitled "Exploiting the potential of agro-industry to support structural transformation in Central Africa" highlighted that, in terms of price competitiveness, Central Africa does not compete with its partners on its own market.

The report identifies high production costs, infrastructure bottlenecks, difficult access to financing and lack of modern technologies, non-conducive business climate and low

economies of scale as the main factors constraining agribusiness inclusive and sustainable development in Central Africa.

As part of the Industrialization and Economic Diversification Master Plan for Central Africa, ECA is urging the sub-region to overcome these challenges through an offensive common agricultural policy: "Agro-industries and the related clusters are drivers of excellence for the development of a competitive agriculture sector in Central Africa. For the production and processing of agricultural products, these arrangements offer the ideal platforms where countries can provide facilities such as world class infrastructure, fiscal incentives, improved seeds and the promotion of customized technologies. Agro-industries and the related clusters will strengthen their inclusivity as they strengthen their linkages with local SMEs through an affirmative local content policy supported by strong quality standards and culture" explained Jean Luc Mastaki. The rural sector represents a huge

pocket of vulnerability for Africa. "The development of agriculture is a perquisite pathway for an inclusive economic and social transformation, which is at the heart of ECA's mandat", concluded Jean Luc Mastaki.

The AfCFTA provide a strong driver for agricultural transformation in Africa. A 2005 NEPAD Report on agribusiness, supply chains and quality control estimates that by 2030, the urbanization underway in Africa will trigger a regional urban demand for food products for about \$150 billion. According to ECA's Economic Report on Africa 2017, this urbanization also implies a change in diets and a demand for protein-rich processed foods. Hence Jean Luc Mastaki's advocated for fostering a partnership towards sharing experience with China on the development of technical and vocational skills linked to agriculture and in promoting agricultural-led special economic zones which are both inclusive and sustainable.

Source: UNECA

African countries could leverage their vast renewable energy and natural resources to export premium carbon credits for new revenue streams

ADDIS ABABA (ECA) – African countries could leverage their vast renewable energy resources, tropical forests, peatlands, and marine ecosystems to export premium carbon credits, providing a new revenue stream, according to the 2024 Economic Report on Africa by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) launched at the recently concluded tenth Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development (ARFSD-10) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

The report says, carbon markets could support Africa's goals of resilience and prosperity, in line with Agenda 2063. They also present a potential path for achieving the Paris Agreement's climate goals.

"A failure, however, to ensure credit additionality, appropriate governance, and high enough prices could lead to perverse market incentives that increase carbon emissions and slow the climate transition on the continent," says the report.

Nassim Oulmane, Acting Director of ECA's Technology Climate Change, and Natural Resource Management Division explains that there are two types of carbon markets that Africa could invest in: the regulatory compliance market and the voluntary carbon market (VCM). But so far, credits from the VCM, where many African countries participate, have been only a small fraction of those supplied by the overall regulatory compliance market.

"In the VCM, the trade of carbon credits is voluntary while the compliance market, is used by companies and governments required by law to account for their greenhouse gas emissions. It is regulated by mandatory

national, regional, or international carbon reduction regimes," he explained.

"Most of the credits in the VCM have come from nature-based solutions, including forest conservation, improved agricultural cultivation, and reforestation. Energy savings from fuel efficiency and fuel switching were additional sources."

The report shows that in 2022, while the VCM value was approaching a mere \$2 billion, the value of traded carbon permits in global markets reached a record EUR 850 billion (\$909 billion). On a more positive note, estimates point to the VCM reaching \$10–\$40 billion by 2030. A third of the VCM's traded volume were retiring credits (that is, buying credits to count towards a commitment), but Africa contributed only 11% of this type of VCM credits in 2016.

"Africa currently realizes only around 2% of its annual potential of carbon credits," says the report.

Explaining Africa's potential in carbon-credits, Mr. Oulmane said the continent should invest in its untapped renewable energy potential; youthful, rapidly growing workforce; available land and other natural assets; and low emissions.

"Proceeds from sales of carbon credits can provide additional revenue for climate-smart interventions," said Mr. Oulmane.

"In addition to improving the climate, many of these interventions improve livelihoods, create jobs, spur new economic and sustainable industrial activity."

The African Carbon Market Initiative (ACMI) estimates that 110–190 million African jobs

can be created by 2050 if the carbon price per tonne reaches \$80 and direct and indirect jobs are added beyond nature-based solutions. Evolving carbon markets also present challenges for African economies.

While the report shows that Cameroon, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and many other African countries have participated in the VCM, five countries were selected for case studies on investing in a sustainability transition: Gabon, Kenya, South Africa, Senegal, and Morocco. Each case study reviews the national policy and strategic context and looks at the investment intervention in a sector important for promoting the transition.

INVESTING IN SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT IN GABON

Through investment in sustainable forest management, Gabon has been able to increase employment opportunities, driven by the increase in wood-processing industries in the Gabon Special Economic Zone in Nkok, from 80 in 2009 to 155 in 2018; minimized its deforestation rate; improved its social welfare with poverty incidence estimated at 33.4% and unemployment estimated at 28.8%.

INVESTING IN GEOTHERMAL DEVELOPMENT IN KENYA

Geothermal energy development helped lift Kenya's GDP from \$70.0 billion in 2015 to \$113.4 billion in 2023 and reduced its carbon footprint from power generation by displacing some traditional fossil fuel-based power generation.

INVESTING IN RENEWABLE ENERGY DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA

A pioneering model for sustainable financing, the Renewable Energy Independent Power Producer Procurement Programme (REIPPPP) with a competitive bidding process employed ensures market-driven prices, fostering cost reductions in energy production. This not only contributes to the country's energy security but also enhances its economic competitiveness on the global stage.

INVESTING FOR GREEN GROWTH IN SENEGAL

The investment in renewable energy model expanding renewable energy infrastructure has given millions of Senegalese access to affordable electricity, fostering growth, sustainability, and resilience in the beneficiary communities. The low tariff of less than EUR 0.04 per kilowatt-hour has improved the purchasing power of the population and stimulated job creation.

SUSTAINABLE FINANCE FOR AN ECOLOGICAL TRANSITION IN MOROCCO

Morocco's development and implementation of the different financing mechanisms under the Low Carbon Strategy - Green innovation of Agadir municipality and - Positive impact bond -has created new job opportunities and stimulated economic growth in related sectors. Climate investments in energy-efficiency measures are leading to cost savings for businesses and households, contributing to economic productivity and competitiveness.

Source: UNECA

Planet Earth



“Clean Streets, Healthy Life” initiative to promote healthy, livable cities in Ethiopia

BY FIKADU BELAY

Air pollution is a critical environmental issue that affects countries around the world, including Ethiopia. As a rapidly developing nation in East Africa, Ethiopia faces significant challenges in managing and mitigating air pollution due to various factors such as industrial growth, urbanization, population growth, and inefficient energy consumption practices. The consequences of air pollution have wide-ranging impacts on human health, the environment, and the economy, making it a pressing concern for policymakers, researchers, and the general public in Ethiopia.

Ethiopia has unique ecosystems, but the country is also grappling with the adverse effects of air pollution. Like developed cities in various countries, Addis and other urban areas here in Ethiopia are particularly affected due to the concentration of manufacturing industries and vehicular emissions, among others. Additionally, the country's reliance on traditional biomass fuels, such as wood and charcoal, for cooking and heating in rural areas contributes significantly to indoor air pollution, further exacerbating the overall air quality concerns.

Urbanization is another crucial factor contributing to air pollution in Addis. As more people migrate from rural areas to cities in search of better opportunities, the demand for housing, transportation, and energy increases. Rapid urbanization often leads to increased vehicular traffic, inadequate waste management systems, and the burning of solid waste, all of which contribute to higher levels of air pollution.

The health effects of air pollution in Ethiopia are significant and far-reaching. Exposure to polluted air can lead to respiratory diseases, cardiovascular problems, and other chronic illnesses. Vulnerable populations, such as children, the elderly and those with pre-existing medical conditions, are particularly at risk. The economic consequences of air

pollution are also substantial, as healthcare costs rise, workforce productivity declines and environmental damage affects agricultural productivity and tourism.

The Prime Minister of Ethiopia, Abiy Ahmed (PhD), recently initiated a groundbreaking movement called “Clean Ethiopia,” aimed at fostering a culture of cleanliness within communities. Emphasizing the significance of modern sanitation practices, he highlighted the importance of constructing state-of-the-art toilets that promote cleanliness and garner respect from the public.

The Prime Minister urged citizens to unite in the pursuit of clean, hygienic cities, thereby introducing the nationwide cleaning campaign known as “Clean Street - Healthy Life.” By implementing this initiative across all our urban centres, he planned the creation of pristine and comfortable living environments for residents.

Furthermore, he underscored the government's ongoing efforts to prioritize the establishment of clean and green surroundings over the past few years. This comprehensive approach not only fosters cleanliness but also combats climate pollution, contributing to a healthier and more sustainable future.

Lemesa Gudeta, the Director of the Environmental Pollution Protection Law Enforcement Directorate, has revealed that pollution-related factors claim the lives of approximately 1600 individuals each year in Addis. The findings shed light on the perilous consequences of pollution and highlight the urgent need for comprehensive measures to safeguard public health.

He emphasized that the alarming statistics are significantly attributed to the concentration of industries within Addis, with approximately 60 per cent of the country's industrial facilities being located in the city. The release of harmful effluents from these industries has led to the contamination of vegetables and subsequent health implications for the population.

He further stressed that a considerable number of the top ten globally recognized fatal diseases are directly linked to pollution. It is therefore imperative for society to acknowledge this grave concern and actively engage in protecting the environment from further degradation.

In response to the growing crisis, the Addis Ababa City Environmental Protection Authority recently organized an awareness forum targeting artists, social media experts, athletes, and influential personalities from various fields. The objective of the forum was to educate and engage these individuals in understanding the nature of environmental pollution and implementing universal prevention strategies.

According to Dida Dirriba, the General Manager of Authority, a city-wide, six-month campaign to combat environmental pollution was launched in April. The campaign aims to raise awareness among over 2.7 million residents of Addis Ababa about the pressing need to address pollution-related challenges.

He highlighted the alarming fact that the pollution level in Addis is higher than the standard set by the World Health Organization. This severe pollution has had a detrimental impact on natural resources, thereby negatively affecting the health and well-being of future generations.

One of the major concerns raised by the General Manager is the improper disposal of industrial effluents into rivers. As a result, the edible vegetables grown in these contaminated water sources pose a significant threat to the health of the residents of the city.

As part of the ongoing campaign, Dida emphasized that the authority will focus on raising awareness about different types of pollution each month. The initiative began with addressing the issue of plastic pollution in April, and the upcoming month of May will be dedicated to combating air pollution.

The authorities believe that by fostering a change in public mindset and implementing effective awareness programs, significant

progress can be made in mitigating pollution-related risks and safeguarding the health and well-being of Addis Ababa's residents.

The battle against pollution requires collective efforts from all stakeholders, including industries, institutions, government bodies, and the general public. By adopting sustainable practices, implementing stricter regulations, and promoting eco-friendly alternatives, Addis Ababa can pave the way towards a cleaner and healthier environment for its citizens.

As the campaign gains momentum, concerned citizens and organizations are hopeful that these initiatives will pave the way for a cleaner, greener and healthier future for Addis Ababa and serve as a model for other cities grappling with similar challenges. Also, individuals and communities must join hands in this critical fight against pollution to ensure a better quality of life for current and future generations.

Recognizing the gravity of the situation, the Ethiopian government, along with international organizations and civil society, has taken steps to address air pollution. Initiatives include the development of air quality monitoring networks, the promotion of cleaner energy sources, the implementation of regulations to control industrial emissions, and public awareness campaigns to educate communities about the impacts of air pollution.

Besides, air pollution poses a significant challenge to Ethiopia's sustainable development and the well-being of its population. The country's industrial growth, urbanization, and reliance on traditional biomass fuels contribute to poor air quality, which has adverse effects on human health, the environment, and the economy. Addressing air pollution requires concerted efforts from various stakeholders, including government bodies, industries, communities, and individuals, to implement sustainable solutions and ensure a cleaner and healthier future for Ethiopia.