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Ethiopia on right track to achieve 7.9% growth plan

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

ADDIS ABABA- The promising performances witnessed in the macro economy including agriculture, industry and service sectors showcase Ethiopia is in the right position to achieve the estimated 7.9% economic growth, the Ministry of Planning and Development (MoPD) said.

MoPD Minister Fitsum Assefa (PhD) briefed the media yesterday about the nine-month performance of the major development sectors in terms of macro economy, infrastructure, public participation and beneficiaries as well as implementation of the reform agenda.

According to the Minister, the promising performance in the macro economy is a clear indication for Ethiopia's capability to register the estimated annual economic growth. "In the agriculture sector for instance, the current performance exceeded that of last year's same period by 100 million quintals of crop. Of the 100 million quintals, summer wheat production covers around 80 million while rice production has been registered to be 38 million quintals."

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Ethiopia sends condolences to Iranian people, gov't

BY STAFF REPORTER

ADDIS ABABA- Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) has extended heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family, the Iranian people and government following the accidental death of Iranian

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Photo: Dagne Abera



ABE initiative, JICA supplementing Ethiopia's dev't, bridging ties: Ambassador

• ABE initiative Alumni reunion celebrated

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

ADDIS ABABA - The African Business Education for Youth (ABE) Initiative and JICA's alumni would contribute to Ethiopia's development and bridging the two countries' bilateral ties, the Japanese Ambassador said.

The first ABE Initiative Alumni Reunion was held last Thursday at the Japanese Ambassador's residence aiming at consolidating the two countries' holistic partnership.

On the occasion, Japanese Ambassador to Ethiopia Shibata Hironori stated that the ABE initiative is critical in strengthening

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Addis marks 61st Africa Day anniversary

• ENDF shares experience to celebrants

BY MESERET BEHAILU

ADDIS ABABA - Ministry of Defense celebrated the 61st Africa Day yesterday under the theme "Together Free, Prosperous, and United Africa."

In his opening speech, Ministry's Foreign Relations and Military Cooperation Director General, Major General Teshome Gemechu said that the Africa is a continent freed from colonialism, racism, and apartheid at a huge sacrifice made by its citizens.

"The main aim of the celebration is to tackle African challenges through sharing experiences and working together under pan-Africanism. This is the day that Africans renew our promises to be more united and work hard to realize our vision withstanding the challenging global

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A Special Economic Zone to accelerate nation's overall economic development

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National Dialogue: A chance waited for years, not to be lost

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News

Authority eyes domestic financing for thriving CSO outreach

BY ASHENAFI ANIMUT

ADDIS ABABA - Domestic financing and resource diversification are game-changers for Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) sustainable functioning, Authority for Civil Society Organizations (ACSOs) said, underlining the need to strengthen outreach projects.

At the forum organized to discuss CSOs proclamation and related matters with stakeholders yesterday, ACSOs Deputy Director General Fasikaw Molla stated that the government has been reforming enabling policies and directives to create conducive playground for civil societies, help expanding outreaches and execute their projects sustainably.

Fasikaw has also remarked that the directive is a significant milestone towards creating a thriving, free, functioning and sustainable civil societies sector and solves pressing issues in the sector that are streamlined across the country and ensure the socioeconomic development of the country.

He said: "Currently, there are about 5,000 legally registered organizations. However, they are not functioning well due to financial and other shortcomings. Out of the total registered organizations, over 3,100 are recently joining the sector. About 2,700 projects are being undertaken across the country."



Fasikaw Molla

Emphasizing the notable outcomes registered by some CSOs in charity, democracy and peace building and other development endeavors, he called on them to be actively involved in the communities pressing issues.

As to him, ineffectiveness, project-based, demand-driven on donors, financial insecurity, resource constraints are among potential bottlenecks to push the organizations forward. Financial freedom is also crucial to nurture influential and neutral civil societies from the donor's dependency.

Given the country's immense resources, he emphasized that the CSOs should also actively engage in resource mobilization schemes cooperating with companies, local investors who are keen to discharge their social corporate responsibilities.

He called on the CSOs to get rid of donor

dependency narration and play their key role in socioeconomic development, peace building, education, health and other sectors.

It was stated that about 100 organizations are currently implementing the set directive.

On his part, MSIE Reproductive Choices Country Director Abebe Shibru (PhD) said that ACSOs income generation activities law would also be an ideal approach to seize dependency on foreign donors and this trend could be exemplary for other donor dependent countries in the years to come.

Accordingly, CSOs such as MSI and Hope Enterprises have shared their business model income generation mechanisms and experiences to other organizations.

Urging the CSOs to actively engage in gap closing roles through sound projects and initiatives, Abebe (PhD) said the Income Generation Activities (IGA) has changed the donor landscape and expanded outreaches.

It is to be recalled that the government has passed a directive which allows Civil Society Organizations to engage in business and investments, resource mobilization and cost sharing to get rid of foreign donors dependency and accomplish their objectives.



EMI Director-General Fetene Teshome

EMI heightening efforts to become vibrant meteorological center

• Forecasts heavy rainfall this summer

BY ASHENAFI ANIMUT

ADDIS ABABA - The Ethiopian Metrology Institute (EMI) said it is maximizing efforts to enhance weather forecasting services through capacity building and technological advancements. Institute's Director-General Fetene Teshome made the above remark while he was briefing the media on the national climate outlook assessment forum for the last Belg season and coming rainy season.

Fetene further remarked that formulating countries experiences, expanding stations and installing cutting-edge technologies, the institute has been delivering reliable and seasonal weather forecast services thereby playing a huge role on the socioeconomic development.

He said, "We are currently working with other ministries, sectors and international actors in area of capacity building, technological advancement and other significant activities to up scale the country's weather forecast system."

On his part, Early Warning Division Deputy Director-General Asaminew Teshome (PhD) said that due to the occurrence of Positive-IOD (Indian Ocean Dipole) and ENSO-LA NINA episode, heavy rainfall is expected over central and South Tigray, Afar, East Amhara northern Somali and eastern portions of the country.

Moreover, western Tigray, west of Amhara, Benishagul-Gumuz, west of Oromiya, Gambella and South Western regions of the country will dominantly receive above normal rainfall and they will get above normal rainfall over some parts, he elaborated. As to him, occasional heavy rainfall will occur during July and August, may cause flood across flood prone areas including cities and landslide over isolated places. Besides, central and south-western parts of the country will dominantly receive normal to above normal rainfall in the coming summer rainy season.

It was also indicated that most parts of the country, especially south and south east parts of the country have experienced normal and above normal rainfall benefiting of the seasonal rain-dependent regions of Ethiopia during the Belg season. Moreover, he underscored that these areas have utilized the rain for potable water, agricultural activities, and fodder production, however, it causes flash flood posed negative impacts on livelihoods in the north, central and the east parts of the country. "It is predicted that a substantial rainfall is expected in most parts of Ethiopia in the coming four months of the rainy season."

Expecting the possible risks of the anticipated heavy rainfall and flash flood in various parts of the country, they urged the entire people to stay informed and make the necessary preparations.

EMI evaluated the Belg season and the coming summer climate outlook in the presence of various senior government officials, regional and federal pertinent stakeholders, scholars and other dignitaries.

MinT committed to digital dev't

• Holds workshop on frequency allocation

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

ADDIS ABABA - Ethiopia is firmly committed to digital development and building an inclusive digital economy that would maintain its auspicious economic progress, the Ministry of Innovation and Technology (MinT) said.

The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) in collaboration with the MinT held the ITU-PRIDA Workshop on National Tables of Frequency Allocation (NTFA) for Region yesterday.

Speaking at the workshop, MinT Minister Belete Molla (PhD) noted that the effective management of the radio frequency spectrum is critical for the development of a thriving digital ecosystem. The National Tables of Frequency Allocation (NTFA) plays a vital role in ensuring efficient and equitable access to this valuable resource.

The Ministry is committed to working closely with the ITU to ensure the success of the plan. The expertise gathered here today will lead to fruitful discussions and concrete action plans, he added.

"We are actively engaged in the African



Digital Transformation Agenda, recognizing the critical role technology plays in our continent's progress. We strongly advocate for the Global Digital Compact to encompass the specific needs and aspirations of Africa, ensuring the sustainable development of the digital sector and its contribution to eradicate poverty."

According to the Minister, the workshop fosters collaboration, deepens understanding and explores innovative approaches to optimize spectrum utilization and address



emerging technological challenges. "The discussions over the next few days will be instrumental in equipping us with the tools and strategies to ensure the radio frequency spectrum serves as a powerful driver for socio-economic development in our respective countries."

For his part, ITU Regional Office Representative Jean-Jacques Massima stated that a technical workshop is aimed at managing the spectrum. Each country should adopt a management of national frequency endeavours and update it regularly.

News

Mercy Corps commissioning energy project to benefit refugees, host communities

BY YESUF ENDRIS

ADDIS ABABA - Mercy Corps announced the commissioning of its 254 kWp solar hybrid mini-grid in the Sheder Refugee Camp of Somali state.

In a press briefing held yesterday, Mercy Corps Country Director, Edwin Kuria said that the mini-grid project, which is a part of the Enter Energy Ethiopia program of Mercy Corps, will serve over 17,600 refugees and host community members, delivering much-needed energy to households, businesses, and essential services.

“Access to energy is a crucial driver of economic development, significantly improving living standards and enabling a multitude of socio-economic activities. Currently, over 114 million individuals worldwide have been forcibly displaced. In Ethiopia alone, millions of forcibly displaced people have less than seven percent access to energy. This scarcity not only hampers their well-being but also limits their ability to engage in productive



activities and secure livelihoods,” he noted.

The initiative marks a significant milestone in the ongoing efforts to provide clean, reliable, and customizable energy solutions to both displaced populations and their host communities, according to him.

In collaboration with Humanitarian Energy Plc, a limited liability company established in Ethiopia by Mercy Corps, and a national partner Rensys Engineering and Trading Plc, the NGO aim to prove

and scale a sustainable energy-as-a-service model that powers households and productive activities, as well as humanitarian operations and agencies, he remarked.

Mercy Corps has its own program—the Enter Energy Ethiopia program, to bridge the energy gap in humanitarian settings, it was stated.

Humanitarian Energy PLC Managing Director, Desalegn Getaneh on his part added that the Sheder 254kWp mini-grid

is a sign of sustainable energy for the Sheder Refugee Camp offering refugees the opportunity to enhance their lives significantly.

Illuminating approximately 2000 households and supporting 300 refugee businesses, along with 16 host community enterprises including six grain millers—this project extends beyond lighting homes, it energizes businesses, bolsters education, and fortifies safety within the camp, he underlined.

Ethiopia sends...

President Ebrahim Raisi, Foreign Minister, Hossein Amir-Abdollahian and other officials.

“On behalf of the People and Government of Ethiopia and myself, I express heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family, people, and government of Iran over the tragic helicopter crash that claimed President Raeisi and Foreign Minister Amir-Abdollahian,” the premier posted on X.

It is to be recalled that a helicopter carrying Iranian President Raisi, his Minister of Foreign Affairs Amir-Abdollahian, and several other officials crashed yesterday in mountainous terrain near the Azerbaijan border.

ABE initiative, ...

the two sides’ multifaceted cooperation. The initiative is intended to support young Africans to be navigators and to contribute to the development of their continent by allowing them to enroll in master’s programs at Japanese universities and experience internships at Japanese companies. The Ambassador expressed optimism that the ABE initiative and JICA’s alumni would contribute to the development of Ethiopia by making use of the experiences they have gained in Japan. They also serve as the bridge between Japan and Ethiopia.

“A total of 87 Ethiopian students have participated in this program since 2014. For the first time, the Embassy hosted a reception as a follow-up to provide an opportunity for the ABE Initiative Alumni to interact with each other after their return to their home country.”

Via the ABE Initiative, several Ethiopian students study in Japan each year. “The Embassy will continue to support students and academic exchanges between the two countries, which will expedite the Ethiopia-Japan longstanding ties,” he remarked. ABE Initiative is a program that offers opportunities for African youth to enroll in master’s programs at Japanese universities as international students and experience internships, it was learned.

Ethiopia on right track to achieve...

Under the ‘Ye Lemat Tirufat’ initiative, it was able to produce two billion liters of milk, 1.4 billion of eggs, 200,000 tons of meat as well as 110,000 tons of honey.

Mentioning that promising results have been registered in the service and transport sectors, Fistum (PhD) highlighted that

the production capacity of industries has seen significantly improved and reached 56% on average in six months alone.

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

Regarding job creation, over 2.1 million citizens were employed over the past nine months of the current fiscal year domestically. Nonetheless, the performance

is unsatisfactory due to the increasing number of job seekers. On the other hand, 278,198 citizens obtained jobs abroad which show a 255% increase from last year’s same period.

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

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

About the financial sector’s performance,

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

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

She said the performance of Abbay Dam, corridor development, ‘Gebeta’ projects as well as digital infrastructure are encouraging.

Private sector and public participation on human-centered projects as well as different government initiatives is also said to be satisfactory.

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

Addis marks 61st Africa Day...

environment,” he noted.

As to him, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) the current African Union (AU) played a magnificent role in promoting solidarity and pan-Africanism and building unity to work together for a common destiny in the dynamic global environment.

The Director General further stated that pan-Africanism is a crucial tool to realize the vision of creating peaceful, strong, prosperous and united Africa. Besides, pan-Africanism to tackle security crises and bring lasting peace by own potential – “African solution to

African problems.”

Representative from Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Jemaludin Mustafa on his part said that the present Africa is an outcome of many sacrifices especially those made in the struggle against colonialism.

He added that the victory of Adwa was the first triumph over colonial power that Africans achieved.

“The transformation of OAU to AU is the content towards a better place and no compromise on rule of law, democracy, respect for human right, ensure empowerment of women, and

the likes across the African continent,” he underlined.

Defense Attaché at Sierra Leone Embassy of Addis Ababa, Brigadier General Abubakarr Contiey said “Celebrating the Day is quite important to drive pan-Africanism which should be the oxygen of the African continent and the means of collective approach.”

Moreover, participants from various African countries have discussed and shared experiences and the way forward on collective action for common goal, it was learned.

Opinion

National Dialogue: Viable remedy to heal long-heaped grudge, enmity

BY MENGESHA AMARE

It is quite recognized that Ethiopia has been baffled by the calculatingly or unknowingly orchestrated cunning approaches and distorted narrations, elements who wished to rule the nation creating sustainable skirmish among citizens, deliberately crafted before. Such a thorny move has to be done away with using a domestic weapon that will last for centuries and even millennia. Yes, if a given country has encountered some sorts of disagreements, rivalry or disparity, they have to devise possible solutions locally without the interference of other countries as locally made solutions are highly likely fruitful, all-encompassing and long-lasting, too.

The role of all citizens, concerned bodies, and civil society organizations is untold in this regard. This incomparable role can be accompanied with a playground that can potentially provide all citizens with ample opportunities to express ideas and feelings to be a feasible input for meaning. Close talks, wider public discussions, and even national dialogue can be regarded as playgrounds to do so.

Particularly the latter is of significantly useful in raising the awareness of the general public and other actors and helping them actively engage in this invaluable national process. All right, 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 (NDC), 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; about the selection process of the commission's members; approaches to conduct the national dialogue, the constitutional reform, and the impacts of active conflicts occur in different parts of the country. The aforesaid and the not yet queries have been properly dealt with by the concerned bodies and the process continues towards its end making stable Ethiopia via peacefully addressing problems emanated from various reasons. This National dialogue is of significantly useful in coming up with a viable remedy to heal long-heaped grudge, enmity among/ between citizens.

Accordingly, the concerns cited by the public representatives and/or participants have been well addressed, indeed. Besides, some of the ideas raised during the discussion would be taken as inputs and incorporated to further strengthen the effort geared towards creating a stable and peaceful nation. The application of National Dialogue in every nook and cranny

of Ethiopia would bear fruits if handled properly and run inclusively. No doubt, support of elites, Support of the public, Support of regional and international actors can be the key factors that affect the success or failure of National Dialogue efforts.

Public discussions are really part of a series of awareness creation moves on the national inclusive dialogue. In a bid to support the National Dialogue Process, with particular attention of enhancing CSOs' understanding around the issue by organizing various awareness creation platforms has played a paramount role in meeting that target.

In fact, supporting the National Dialogue process is in the best interest of the nation particularly now more than ever where peace building is essential and becomes a matter of life and death. Hence, collaboration between/among all actors to support the National Dialogue is commendable and should pave the way for similar collaborations in all parts of the society to support the process and to overcome challenges and to achieve sustainable peace in the country. Here it is obvious that together, making a difference would be as easy as talking about so the saying goes, "Unity is strength".

The Ethiopian Civil Society Organizations Council (ECSOC) is also scaling up the pace to help civil societies play a constructive role in the upcoming national dialogue. Various measures have been taken for a successful national dialogue to take place in a manner it said to be 'all-inclusive, convenient and knowledge-based. This is really a promising step, indeed!

A lot is expected of the Commission, and civil societies have a huge role to play in the national dialogue. In order for the national dialogue to be successful, the Commission has many responsibilities and ethics is very important in carrying out such a delicate process. Reinvigorating regular dialogue and consultations with Civil Society (CS) is one of the principles as it is used for ensuring consistency and transparency of public discussions and promoting the comprehensive and progressive participation of Civil Society and the general public too.

As promoting the exchange of information and experiences on the commission's main policies and initiatives, as well as on-going institutional reforms in the country, the dialogue would come to the forefront, of course. It is believed that coordination of many activities will greatly enhance the effectiveness, relevance and impact of the engagement and contribute to the realization of the overall objectives of the commission.

The national dialogues would be instrumental in bringing together all relevant national stakeholders and actors based on a broad mandate to foster nationwide consensus with respect to key conflict issues.

The National Dialogue has, thus, gained

considerable importance as a platform for peaceful transformation. It further reflects the belief that conflict resolution processes must be as inclusive as possible, involving a broad range of political actors and extending beyond a limited set of political players to include society at large.

The onus of conflict resolution has therefore recently shifted from the national to international level. If a process excludes important stakeholders or is perceived to serve the short-term political goals of the government, constitutional reform proposals are unlikely to gain impetus. Thus, it has to be made inclusive and participatory.

Unequivocally, a constitution established under law and designed to be inclusive of all citizens and civil society or the general public can secure legal legitimacy. This in turn can make such a process be more likely than a National Dialogue to comply with generally accepted understandings of fair representation and the expectations of a democratic process across the nation. Often, for a dialogue to be taken seriously and for participants to honor its outcomes, parties will need to have provided some concrete revelation of their intentions in advance.

Interestingly, Ethiopia has attempted, and even is relentlessly trying, to hold the first of its kind, a national dialogue in response to historical economic, social, political and other related quests. It is also known that Ethiopia formed the first-ever, national dialogue in 2022 so as to examine the challenges and prospects of the national discourse. True, national dialogue is a public political cycle pointed toward many public entertainers amid profound political emergencies, post-struggle circumstances, or during significant political changes.

National dialogue in Ethiopia is thus being utilized as an equivalent for formal discussions between/among citizens to devise possible solutions to the problems occurred across the nation. The process keeps on standing out as truly newsworthy all over Ethiopia and has as of late been proposed or gathered in citizens confronting raising a range of questions regarding peace, security and social well being.

It is really a nationally owned political processes aiming at establishing agreement among a broad variety of national stakeholders in times of significant political crisis and during major political transitions. Likewise, National Dialogue fosters ownership within new political, economic, and social systems, intending to establish new institutions and negotiate a new or revised social compact between the state and its population. Developing socio-political procedures that may serve as containers for peacefully resolving these issues is critical, and serves as the experience foundation for further institutional transformation and nation-building.

It should be noted that the inspirations for participating in a national dialogue

differ and rely vigorously upon whether the exchange is pointed toward advancing grasping, changing the personalities and interests of partners, or essentially pointing towards keeping away from heightening and falling back on savagery.

More importantly, in an increasingly polarized and already tense political landscape, the government needs to create a platform that truly opens the way for a negotiated political solution to break the current impasse and for peace.

The nationwide dialogue forum should be convened with the participation of political leaders, traditional and religious leaders, youth representatives, women, the general public; bodies provoked armed conflicts, and other stakeholders. Yes, it is this time the fruitfulness of the dialogue could be accurately measured. The National Dialogue Committee needs to promptly translate promises into practical actions.

Thus, Ethiopia will survive if leaders and elites unite to forge a new countrywide consensus and build a new political order that guarantees the honor, coexistence, and solidarity of the people. To this end, the country is on the verge of an inclusive national dialogue procedure in which all stakeholders can come together and speak about vital national troubles to attain a common and lasting political answer.

True, the process could allow rival ideologies and communities in Ethiopia to redefine their relationships and promote higher expertise on the troubles that divide and polarize. A national dialogue ought to help bridge the rift between different actors and foster a culture of communication and collaboration, and agree. Ethiopian domestic politics has been producing consistent violence and anxiety for years due to political reforms and demands for a negotiated political solution have been rejected for many years. Now it is time to address all these irregularities.

In sum, the National Dialogue in Ethiopia has provided a broad range of stakeholders such as government ministries and agencies, non-governmental/civil society organizations, communities, academic and research institutions and the private sector, as well as partners and donors within a country with a means for working together learn, discuss and agree, or take steps toward agreement against skirmishes, conflicts, be they are intermittent or sporadic and recurrent, across the board.

Principally, as national dialogue is an opportunity to settle accounts with the ghosts of the beyond and renegotiate destiny, it will not be without challenges. Hence, the government needs to devise possible solutions to the many problems and multifaceted defies rampant in the country.

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

Editorial

Opinion

Bold move to inclusively serve citizens

The very motto of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) stating 'No one is left behind,' is presumably practically exercised in Ethiopia as the government is working hard to provide all citizens, including people with disabilities, with balanced and inclusive service. The government has time and again heralded that the development which is run across the nation has to take the issues, interests and citizenship matters these people do possess into account since every sphere of progress undertaken setting their concerns aside leads nowhere.

It is also well recognized that people with disabilities, as precious segments of citizens, have to be provided with respect, amicable way, optimism, and willingness to find ways to communicate as the latter are the best tools to make them closer and feel safe among their compatriots.

The government is working towards empowering people with disabilities thereby making them full participants in every simmer of the society across the nation. Citizens can all make this goal a reality by respecting and accordingly assisting people with disabilities.

The Office of the First Lady Zinash Tayachew has been inaugurating schools, disability centers and other suitable establishments for citizens with a range of disabilities. The launching of The Sheika Fatima Bint Mubarak School for the Blind built through the Office of the First Lady is a clear manifestation of such a lucid commitment of the government to well empower people with disabilities. It was emphasized that meeting the needs of individuals/citizens with disabilities in due course of designing as well as building infrastructure in cities and towns is of paramount importance in boosting the confidence and courage of these segments of the society.

Yes, constructing schools for the blind, for the deaf and for those individuals with various forms of disabilities in general is a sign of civility, indeed! Here citing the words of the Premier during the launching of the aforesaid would be quite important to initiate others to do the same, 'Learning from the success of this school for the blind, we need to make sure that the city infrastructure we build needs to pay attention to the needs of those with disabilities.'

The inauguration ceremony incorporated individuals with visual impaired entails that they are given due emphasis more than ever before. Most importantly, the significance of ensuring cities' infrastructure helps accommodate the needs of individuals with disabilities, maintain their safety and discharge respective responsibilities towards serving these people equally with those who are out of the category, and is part and parcel of the national agenda, too.

Unequivocally, as people with disabilities have the same needs all human beings do possess, first and foremost is to be treated with dignity, respect and sympathy, their interest has to be well met. Hence, when people interact with disabilities, they have to focus on their abilities, not their disabilities. People with disabilities are unique individuals who have a wealth of knowledge, skills, talents, interests, and experiences that add tremendous diversity, resourcefulness, and creative energy to the existing humanity.

True, the launch of the new centre/school signifies a considerable progression in delivering comprehensive services and inclusive administration and treatment. Plus establishing the visually/hearing impaired—focused centre would alleviate the worries of parents/guardians as well as the burden they themselves bear. In so doing, the government has helped citizens with disabilities lead happier and more prosperous lives via increasing the opportunity they would be benefited by providing them with equipment to walk, hear and to be led. As the school inaugurated comprises all facilities that are designed to make learning easy, students with disabilities will attend education with no difficulty.

All in all, Ethiopia has been doing a remarkable deed to put the 'No one is left behind,' principle of SDGs into practice.

Africa need to invest in its human, financial capital

BY STAFF REPORTER

Human capital consists of the knowledge, skills, and health that people invest in and accumulate throughout their lives, enabling them to realize their potential as productive members of society.

On the other hand, Financial capital (also simply known as capital or equity in finance, accounting and economics) is any economic resource measured in terms of money used by entrepreneurs and businesses to buy what they need to make their products or to provide their services to the sector of the economy upon which their operation is based.

Africa should boost investment in human and financial capital to accelerate its sustainable industrialization and economic growth, as some economists suggested.

Indeed, human and financial capitals were key drivers for sustainable industrialization. Much of Africa was off track to meeting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) despite the region having endowments to rescue the SDGs and achieve Agenda 2063.

African countries should align their education systems with market and societal needs. Equally, governments must invest in science, technology, and innovation to move away from the resource extractivism model that characterizes most of Africa's mineral-rich countries and escalate value chains to avoid the middle-income trap.

The impact of the global shocks of conflict, climate, food, and energy crises as well as heightened tensions call for a strong African position within the global geopolitical economy. For countries in the SADC region, the Russian/Ukraine conflict laid bare the fragility of the diversification strategies that do not address the structural issues compounding our growth model and the germane issues of poverty and inequality. Commodity dependence has left many African economies at the mercy of global commodity price fluctuations, boom and bust cycles, leading to macroeconomic instability.

African countries need to break this vicious cycle of commodity dependence and trade diversification as the solution to reducing the region's vulnerability to global market turbulence and geopolitics.

The continent region needs a fit-for-purpose industrialization and economic diversification pathway to rescue the SDGs and achieve Agenda 2063.

Business as usual will not deliver the SDGs and Agenda 2063 nor the future we want. Africa need a paradigm shift in its approach to accelerate the pace of industrialisation, achieve an impactful structural transformation, and meet our goals."

African leaders have to establish an ecosystem for transformational change and leadership that brings together the government, the private sector, and other stakeholders in quality dialogues and co-creation of home-grown solutions.

The time requires to creating an enabling environment for Foreign Direct Investment, to be equally be spared into creating an adequate environment for domestic investors, big and small, because the emergence of a strong and competitive small and medium-sized enterprise sector will create the jobs citizens need for the youth. Industrial policies need be at the center of development policies.

African countries must move beyond aid and broaden finance to enhance productive capabilities by mobilizing more domestic resources through pension funds which are attracted to bankable projects.

Greening industrialization is possible in continent and it would be a very smart course of action because soon it will be increasingly difficult for us to export our value-added goods to jurisdictions that are introducing carbon borders.

Carbon credit markets can support industrialization in Africa; the effort of some countries could lead the region's efforts in monetizing the ecological services of natural capital to finance structural projects.

At US\$120 a ton of CO2 sequestered, Africa can generate US\$82 billion a year, more than what the continent receives from Overseas Development Assistance. In addition, the development of transboundary battery and electric value chain would benefit the some parts of the region to produce batteries locally and accelerate the deployment of solar and wind energy across Africa.

Countries in the Africa region have to diversify their economy by not only moving up the value chain but expanding into other sectors such as agriculture and agribusiness.

Experts underlined the importance of mobilizing financial resources from diverse sources, including establishing a special purpose vehicle to enable them to tap dormant pension funds for development projects as well as developing carbon credit market.

Strengthening the national statistics system was critical for African countries to mainstream natural capital in their national accounting. Such sort of accounting will ensure that the country's wealth is adequately measured and could improve their ranking beyond the GDP positioning.

Considering that it is crucial for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Africa need to invest in its human as well as financial.

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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
Fb/ /Ethiopian Press Agency/
The Ethiopian Herald

Business & Economy

A Special Economic Zone to accelerate nation's overall economic development

BY BACHA ZEWDIE

Gada Special Economic Zone (GSEZ), located 65km east of Addis Ababa-the capital of Ethiopia-is a new industrial, trade, investment and urban development initiative developed by Oromia National Regional State. It has been designed to accelerate the overall economic development of the country.

According to the Director General's message printed on the magazine dispatched on the launching ceremony of construction of GSEZ on 10 May, 2024, it aligns with the economic reform agenda, emphasizing ease of doing business and the development of multisectoral economy of Ethiopia. This initiative reflects Ethiopia's aspiration to become a beacon of economic prosperity.

To begin with briefing about Special Economic Zone (SEZ), it is a geographical area designated by an appropriate organ that is subject to customs and is attended by business enabling policies, trade facilitation service, infrastructure and utilities, and amenities including a one-stop shop, duty and tax-free privileges and other special incentives, and as appropriate organizing within it any one or several of the following constituents: industry park, free trade, and logistics zones, science and technology parks, service parks, agriculture and livestock zones and small investments.

The World Bank defines Special Economic Zones within six typologies: free trade zones, export processing zones, hybrid export processing zones, free ports, specialized zones and enterprise zones. Befitting this definition, GSEZ envisions becoming Africa's premier economic center by 2062, achieved through the establishment of cost-effective, integrated infrastructure and the cultivation of an appealing investment climate. It is strategically structured to encompass key land use categories such as free trade zones, logistics hubs, export processing zones, various industrial clusters, agro-processing, real estates, commercial and financial centers, social amenities, and recreational facilities among others.

While launching the construction of the Gada Special Economic Zone in Lume District, East Shewa Zone of the Oromia State, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) said that the government aims to replicate the agriculture sector's success in the manufacturing industry and to expedite Ethiopia's economic progress. He noted that the GSEZ serves as a pivotal platform to realize the government's vision of replicating its successes in the agricultural sector in the industrial domain.

The success that has been registered in wheat and other agricultural commodities should not be taken as means for boasting but should serve as a spring board for



the bulk work ahead. It is the time to gear focus towards the manufacturing industry since sticking on agriculture alone does not take the country forward, he emphasized.

“For Ethiopia to become competent in the global economic arena, leveraging on manufacturing industry is crucial. In this regard, the establishment of the GSEZ is instrumental in unlocking Oromia's and Ethiopia's vast potential for manufacturing industry,” the premier said.

The PM said that the day of launching the construction of the special economic zone was a special day of joy because it was the turning point to shifting topic of discussion from agricultural issues like production of wheat, coffee, rice and others witnessed good beginning to industrial development. It is a big deal to begin modernized manufacturing industry that is capable to consume large amount of working force through its employment opportunities and gratitude shall go for chief of Oromia State, Shimelis Abdissa and colleagues for the success they have registered in this regard.

“The leadership witnessed in agriculture development should be realized in the manufacturing industry too as a result of your contribution to this success is great and we expect more from you. You need to work day and night with great discipline for the project's accomplishment so that we are optimistic to be witness again seeing your pledge translated into practice,” the PM urged.

Unless the success begun in agriculture is backed by and replicated in industry, as of the prime minister, it would be hard to realize the sought prosperity. Though agriculture provides inputs to the industry, it lacks potential to attain prosperity alone if not supported by industry. The industry should be managed in the way it proceeds the success agriculture has begun to register.

“We have learned a lot from trajectory of our industrialization since its inception.

We cannot transform our industrial firm by constructing industrial parks with loan finance and transferring only to foreign investors. Therefore, as the outcome of our policy reform, we have come to a conclusion that preparing free trade zones and handing over to local and foreign investors is viable,” he underlined.

Following the policy reform, Dire Dawa Free Trade Zone became operational being the first of its kind and the free trade zone to take place in GSEZ will be the second and the trend will continue in similar trend. It is expected to heal unemployment and foreign currency crunch pitfalls via providing bulk jobs and earning foreign currency because it is designed to focus on export products. Relieving the burden against the government, it will make the development healthy, he noted.

It is the time to unlock the industrial sector based on key measures like policy reform, infrastructure development such as highways and railways construction, energy provision, and trained human resource with good work ethics, supplying sufficient agricultural inputs in quantity and quality to be processes for foreign market and availing any necessary support the investors need from the government. As the country now can provide all these in full package, unlocking the sector is no more problem.

Though launching a project is good news, the chronic problem the country has suffered from is finalizing which needs more effort from those concerned. The premier expressed his hope that those in the leadership of Oromia State will make the project's completion a success story but when only going beyond getting satisfied with minor achievements for there are more to do in the country.

On his part, Chief Of State of Oromia, Shimelis Abdissa said that the reform government has been performing vast deeds for the past years in economic transformation, especially that benefit the general public based on the ideas generated and initiated by the prime minister. The Oromia State in particular, has gone

long distance to transform livelihood of the farmers. Essential support has been provided to the farmers not to confine on farming; rather to transform to investors using income they gain from agriculture. Over the past years, it could be possible to transfer more than 15,000 farmers to investor level.

In so doing, Shimelis said the agriculture sector has become modernized and livelihood of the farmers has made fundamental change. This includes both the farmers and pastoralists. They are able to play remarkable share in the nation's journey to prosperity.

On the other hand, in order to expand industrialization, the Regional State has paid special consideration especially in increasing skilled labor, strengthening investment, and availing one stop service to encourage foreign and local investors. The regional state is playing its utmost role for the blossom of industrialization, he noted.

The Director General, GSEZ, Motuma Temesgen on his part said that the economic transformation the government has taken so far, as it is observed, is bearing fruit. In this regard, based on lucrative research, the Gada Special Economic Zone will be operational soon aiming at the central core of speeding up economic transformation. Setting a far reaching plan, the GSEZ has completed preparation to construct a globally recognized economic hub.

Motuma further detailed that the economic zone is established with the vision to take its part in strengthening export trade, attracting export oriented investment, generating foreign currency thereby increasing nation's income, creating vast employment opportunity to the youth, widening urbanization and creating suitable conditions for the public.

GSEZ is planned to provide various services and different economic clusters like logistics, free trade zone, industrial clusters, real estate development, integrated agro processing parks, entertainment and tourism parks among others on 24,000 hectares of land. The zone is planned to be developed in four chapters of which the first is Logistics Park, free trade zone, export products processing and industry. All in all, it is the first in its kind to be core of the nation's economic integration, transformation and assurance of prosperity.

The construction site is selected via thorough study for its appropriateness in terms of accessibility through various means of transportation from any direction; its proximity to the capital and closeness to railway and highway. Land Preparation was primary task via paying billions of Birr for compensation that ensures incorporate multiple of local and foreign investment; Motuma noted and invited domestic and foreign investors to engage in the special economic zone.

In the Sphere of Diplomacy

Ethiopia, Azerbaijan are building stronger bilateral ties

BY EYUEL KIFLU

The importance of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed during Deputy Prime Minister Temesgen Tiruneh's visit has been underlined by Ethiopia and Azerbaijan last week. According to the local media, the Memorandum of Understanding calls for the creation of centres in Ethiopia that would follow the "ASAN Xidmet" model of the state agency for public services in Azerbaijan.

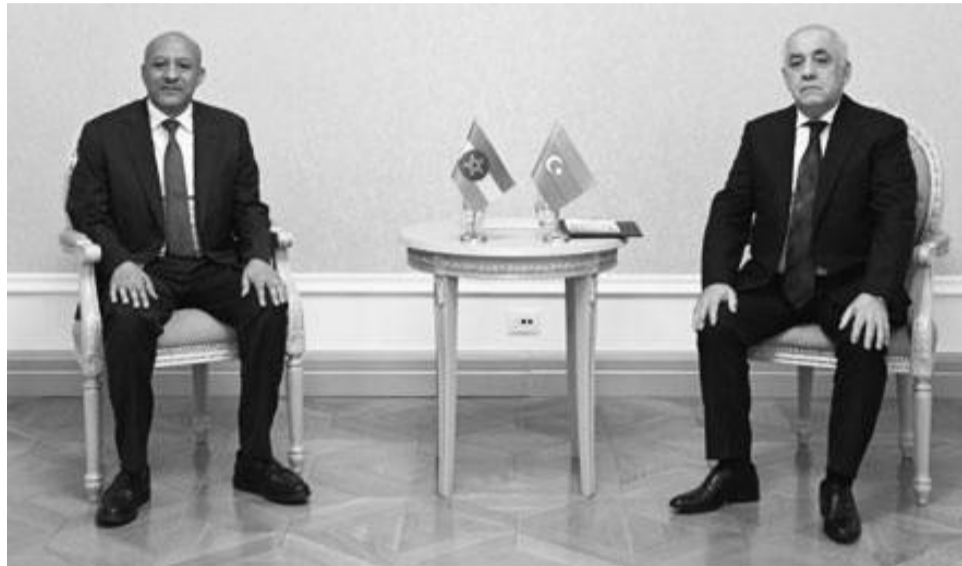
Ali Asadov, the Prime Minister of Azerbaijan, stressed the critical importance Baku attaches to cultivating relations with African states, including Ethiopia, during a recent meeting with a team led by the Deputy Prime Minister of Ethiopia. The two nations praised each other's collaboration in international organizations and emphasized how critical it is to take advantage of all opportunity to deepen bilateral connections, especially in the fields of social innovations and public services.

Expanding the bilateral relationship between Addis Ababa and Baku in a number of sectors was another topic of discussion during the conference. After seeing the potential for cooperation in trade and investment, cultural exchanges, and diplomatic cooperation, the two nations have set out to build a strong and mutually beneficial partnership.

The diplomatic relations of the two nations were established on November 2, 1992. Since then, the relationship has grown across multiple sectors, and both countries face the challenge of being landlocked. However, Azerbaijan, as a landlocked country in the South Caucasus region, has made significant strides in enhancing its import-export capabilities by securing access to the sea. The establishment of the Alat-Astara Railway line connecting Azerbaijan to Iran's Persian Gulf ports marks a pivotal moment for the nation's economic development.

This strategic move opens up new avenues for Azerbaijan to diversify its trade routes and reduce dependency on existing transit corridors. By leveraging this railway link, the country aims to streamline its export processes, particularly for oil and gas products, and attract foreign investment through improved connectivity. The enhanced access to sea routes not only strengthens Azerbaijan's position as a key player in regional trade but also bolsters its economy by fostering greater trade volumes and economic growth opportunities.

As a landlocked country, Ethiopia can draw valuable lessons from Azerbaijan's approach to expanding trade opportunities. By investing in multi-modal transportation networks and forging strategic partnerships with neighbouring countries, Addis Ababa can overcome the challenges posed by



By aligning their positions on key issues, sharing expertise, and supporting each other's initiatives, the two countries contribute to a more harmonious and prosperous world

its geographical constraints and unlock new pathways for economic growth. The recent movement by Ethiopia to access the sea further bolsters the country's growing economy.

In addition to the importance of sea access, the collaboration between Ethiopia and Azerbaijan is focused on trade and investment. Both countries possess abundant natural resources and have made significant strides in economic development. The former with its burgeoning economy and strategic location in East Africa, offers a gateway to the wider African market, while the latter, situated at the crossroads of Europe and Asia, serves as a vital link between these two continents. By leveraging their respective strengths, the two nations are poised to enhance bilateral trade, promote investment opportunities, and explore joint ventures in sectors such as energy, agriculture, infrastructure, and technology.

The two countries diplomatic coordination is another vital aspect of the growing partnership of the nations. Both countries recognize the importance of collaborating on regional and global issues to further their common objectives. As active members of international organizations such as the United Nations, African Union, and Organization of Islamic Cooperation, Ethiopia and Azerbaijan have demonstrated their commitment to upholding peace, stability, and development on the global stage.

By aligning their positions on key issues, sharing expertise, and supporting each other's initiatives, the two countries contribute to a more harmonious and prosperous world.

As this relationship flourishes, it is crucial to underline the potential benefits it holds for the citizens of both nations. Closer cooperation can lead to job creation, technology transfer, and enhanced skills development, ultimately improving the quality of life for people in both countries. Additionally, the exchange of knowledge and best practices in various sectors can accelerate progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

in both nations.

The future looks promising for Ethiopia and Azerbaijan as they embark on this path of collaboration and friendship. By harnessing their collective strengths, these nations have set the stage for a partnership that could serve as a model for cooperation between countries across different regions.

Remarkably, following a joint parliamentary meeting last year, the two countries pledged to keep enhancing their diplomatic, public service, economic, and inter-parliamentary ties. Betelhem Laké, the Chairwoman of the Ethiopia-Azerbaijan Parliamentary Friendship Group, emphasized Ethiopia's intention to collaborate with Azerbaijan in areas such as investment, trade, and education. The parliamentary friends of Ethiopia and Azerbaijan also emphasized the significance of assiduously pursuing the enhancement of the two countries' comprehensive bilateral relations.

The economic relations between the two countries are steadily strengthening. According to The Observatory of Economic Complexity (OEC) report in 2022, Azerbaijan exported 137,000 dollar worth of Refined Petroleum to Ethiopia. Over the past 22 years, the former's exports to the latter have grown at an annual rate of 16.2%, from 5,000 in 2000 to 137,000 dollar in 2022.

In the same year, Ethiopia exported 175,000 dollar worth of goods to Azerbaijan, with Coffee (\$57.6 thousand), Cut Flowers (\$47.7 thousand), and Spices (\$43 thousand) being the main commodities. Ethiopia's exports to Azerbaijan have increased at an annual rate of 17% over the last 22 years, rising from 5.49 thousand in 2000 to 175,000 dollar in 2022 as per the report findings.

High-ranking officials from Ethiopia and Azerbaijan visit each other as a means of enhancing their ties. During a formal visit to Ethiopia in November 2017, Elmar Mammadyarov, the former foreign minister of Azerbaijan, had meetings with senior Ethiopian officials and former president Mulatu Teshome to discuss on regional issues and bilateral cooperation. The groundwork for further cooperation between the two nations was established by this visit.

In conclusion, Ethiopia and Azerbaijan are strengthening their ties through a Memorandum of Understanding that focuses on areas such as public services and social innovations. The collaboration between the two countries extends to trade and investment, cultural exchanges, and diplomatic coordination. By leveraging their respective strengths and learning from each other's experiences, Ethiopia and Azerbaijan aim to enhance bilateral trade, promote investment opportunities, and foster economic growth.

Law & Politics

National Dialogue: A chance waited for years, not to be lost

BY DANIEL ALEMAYEHU

The long-awaited national dialogue and reconciliation under the authority of the Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission is about to be implemented throughout the nation. The commission and every responsible actor or entity, including the government, has to play a role in pushing the process to the finish line. This time, losing the best chance of bringing peace and common ground to the nation will definitely cost the country its arm and leg. All responsible stakeholders, along with the people at large, must support the process.

The country has been between two fences for many segments of time as the nation has been dealing with some major challenges from every corner of the nation. The people have been the first to face those problems that have been ruining the nation for decades. Disputes, false narrations, and conflicts, among other things, have caused the nation unprecedented inconvenience in the past.

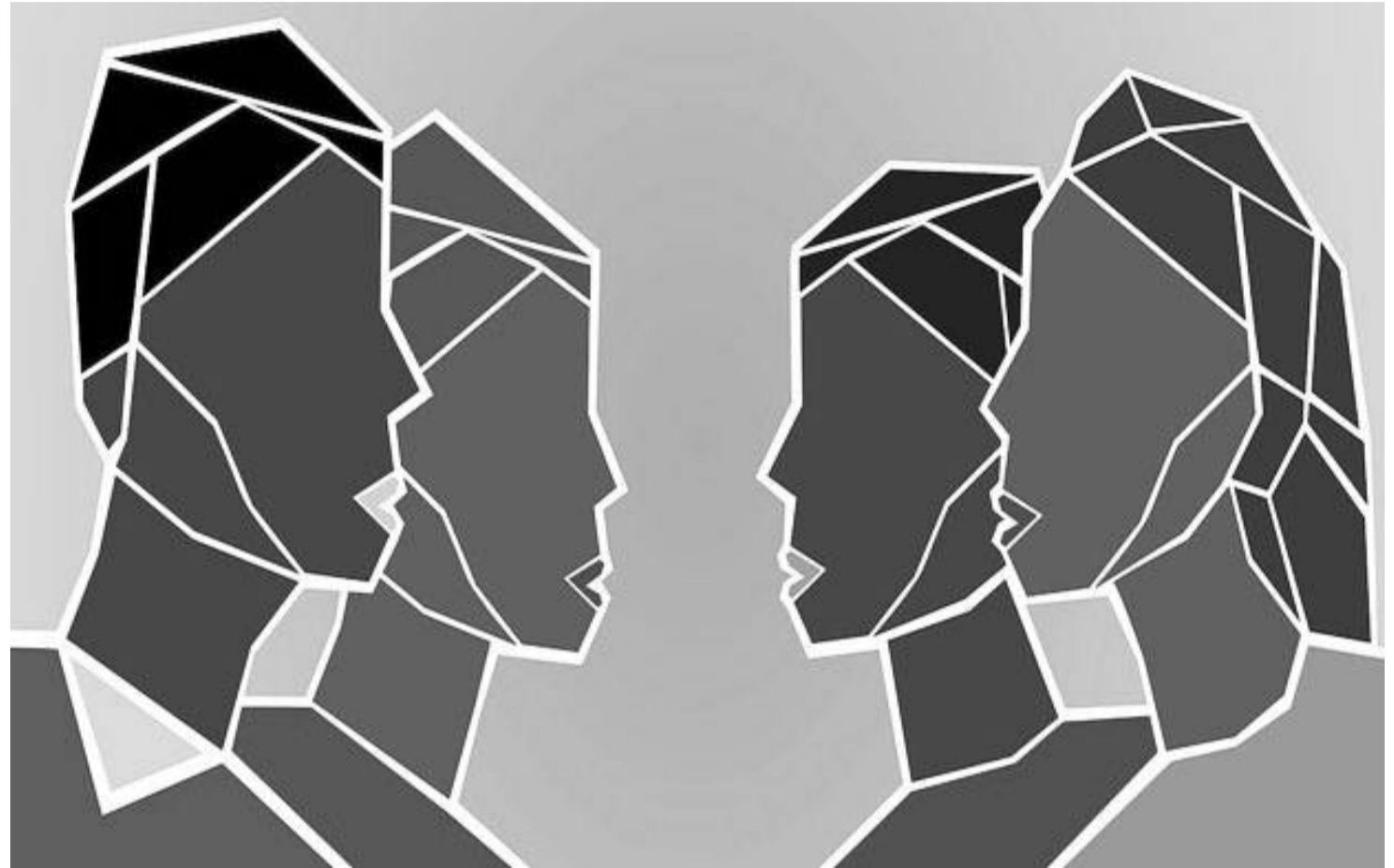
Those divisions among the people due to the false narrations spread in the past many years made the possibilities of finding a common ground hard to find. During past regimes, the people of Ethiopia had been suffering from many national hurdles that needed a bold national move. One of those moves that the people cried for could be the way to national dialogue and reconciliation.

Since the moment of its inception, the Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission has taken on the responsibility of making the necessary moves towards the realization of its goals. With the help of different actors as well as the current incumbent, the commission has taken bold steps in gathering agendas coupled with crucial inputs for the realization of national dialogue and consensus.

On top of that, it is important to understand that the essence of performing a national dialogue was, in the past, the dream for most Ethiopians, as those past regimes failed to achieve the goal of bringing the idea of national dialogue to life.

For this generation, it is a mighty idea and plan, and it is also a blessing to see a commission facilitate a national dialogue, the biggest action ever made in the nation. It is also a good omen to witness a commission working on performing activities to organize a platform and bring every sect of the nation together. It is trying to include elites, politicians, and the government, and above all, anyone who wants to be part of the process for a bigger picture of the country. Besides, the commission has also called on armed groups to join the path to national consensus, as it is vital not to leave anyone behind in the process.

Accordingly, for an action that has been waited for so many years, every Ethiopian



Everyone is responsible for handing over some stones to build a castle that can incorporate all the people and groups of the nation and a platform that can serve all ideas raised from different directions

has to contribute to its realization as the generation is about to witness what our fathers craved for. We also need to understand that we cannot lose this opportunity that leads the nation to be unified and incorporate people who can stand on common grounds and values.

During a stay with the local media, Rahel Bafe, a member of the Advisor Group of the National Dialogue Commission, discussed the benefits that the national dialogue brings to the nation at large. She said that the upcoming inclusive dialogue in Ethiopia is a critical opportunity that will play a significant role in shaping the destiny of the nation.

Ethiopia is finalizing its preparation to

conduct the first ever inclusive national dialogue with the main objective of creating national consensus on critical matters by recognizing and resolving long-standing disputes and disagreements.

Rahel said the dialogue is a golden opportunity for all Ethiopians to bring critical national agendas to the table for discussions for the betterment of the country. "This opportunity might happen once in life; once it is passed, we might not get it again like the 5-year term election," she underscored.

According to her, the dialogue encompasses a wide range of national issues, both past and present, as well as the future. It should also be taken as one of the processes essential to effective nation-building initiatives and phenomena that go beyond political boundaries. Even though there is a political component to this nationwide consultation, it is still important for all Ethiopians to bring up national issues for consideration, Rahel stated.

The people of Ethiopia, including political parties and other pertinent actors in the country, should not miss this opportunity and engage actively by playing their constructive role to successfully accomplish the dialogue, as it is a phenomenon that might happen once in history, she underscored.

"Political parties might be gone in 20 years, but the country will remain forever. Therefore, this national dialogue is beyond political interests," Rahel further stressed the need for all political parties to work in cohesion with the commission's guidelines and schedule to contribute their part to the successful conduct of the process.

In addition, coupled with the steps taken by the commission to realize the dialogue, all

the actors in the country and abroad must take the initiative to support it. Everyone is responsible for handing over some stones to build a castle that can incorporate all the people and groups of the nation and a platform that can serve all ideas raised from different directions.

By the same token, there are many organizations that have shown their interest in supporting the process, the Council of Ethiopian Civil Society Organizations is one of them. The council, as it is reported, has affirmed its commitment to providing ongoing assistance and cooperation for the successful implementation of the national dialogue process.

The Council acknowledged the ongoing efforts underway for the national dialogue process since the inception of the National Dialogue Commission.

Hana Woldegabriel, Representative of the Director General of the Council, emphasized the Council's dedication to addressing crucial national matters. She specifically highlighted their contributions to peace building, humanitarian aid, and the national dialogue process.

In a show of unwavering commitment, the Council confirmed that its support and participation will remain steadfast in ensuring the successful conduct of the national consultation.

Furthermore, Hana stated that the agendas compiled by various civil society organizations, representing their collective interests, will be presented to the Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission today. The discussion forum witnessed the attendance of commissioners from the National Dialogue Commission, representatives from civil society organizations, and other distinguished guests.

Society



Creating tomorrow's leaders, today

BY ELIZABETH MENGISTU

Children are the most precious assets of the nation; and the future of a country heavily rests on its tomorrow's citizens. It is today's children who can contribute positively to the community in which they live and help to shape the future of their country.

However, this will only happen when we give due attention to them from their early age, create a safe and nurturing environment where they can develop their social, ethical, emotional, physical, and cognitive competencies and allow them to reach their full potential.

Due to this, investing in children's overall development- education, health, and well-being among others- is of critical importance to help them grow into responsible citizens who take over all kinds of responsibilities; and contribute meaningfully within their respective community and their country.

With this same intention, Ethiopia has given special attention to the development of children - to improve the lives of children from their tender age, help them become responsible and principled citizens through promoting real-life skills.

Principally, the Addis Ababa, the City Administration is undertaking numerous activities that will improve the lives of children in the capital. By launching a new multi-sectoral initiative- Early Childhood Development (ECD) program- two years ago, it is striving to create an enabling environment that supports children's developmental outcomes and ensure that all children in the city have the best start in life to create a better future for themselves and for Ethiopia by 2025, as to Administration's website.

"Early childhood development is a top priority for the Addis Ababa City administration. We want to ensure that all children in this city have the best start in life, helping to create a better future for themselves and for Ethiopia," Mayor Adanech Abiebie stated while elaborating the aim of the initiative.

Currently, impressive children-centered works, including the construction of 305 children playgrounds are ongoing to help children grow physically, mentally and psychologically. What is more, every

Sunday morning, 114 roads remain closed to traffic so that children can get together and play on the streets freely.

Recently, mayors and ministers drawn from different African cities and representatives of development partners paid a visit to the activities carried out by the Addis Ababa City Administration in relation to the Early Childhood Development programs being implemented in different areas in Addis Ababa.

In a remark she posted on her social media page, Mayor Adanech Abiebie said: "we let leaders, who came from different African countries to our city, Addis Ababa, to draw on experience, visit children's playgrounds and related services which is part of our childhood development intervention and we are working on it targeting to create favorable and comfortable environment for children."

"Hoping that the seeds we sow today to give us abundant good fruits tomorrow, we have built 597 daycare centers around residential areas, in private and public institutions. We are also closely supervising the activities carried out in these daycare centers in relation to providing nutritious food for children, and services such as babysitting, health monitoring, learning through play, maternal counseling services, and special care for their complete development," she remarked.

The visitors too appreciated the Early Childhood Program being implemented in Addis Ababa and revealed that it is a good experience that should be replicated in other African countries.

Among the visitors that ENA approached, Mayor of Lusaka, capital of Zambia, Chilando Chitangala is the one. Chilando said that the growth of any country depends on its children, as children are the future of a nation. In this regard the activity she has witnessed in Addis Ababa is very inspiring. This clearly shows the special attention that the Ethiopian government has given to the development of children. Thus, the implementation of Addis Ababa's Early Childhood Initiative is a good experience that can be replicated in Lusaka and other African countries.

"We all know that the first 1000 days of a child are the most important times for its

the critical years for child development. There are a lot of interventions in Africa in terms of healthcare to make sure that pregnant mothers get the right care and make sure that the infants are breast fed and immunized.

She expressed her admiration of the program in Addis Ababa as it is being implemented in a way that fits within the existing culture and context.

Silantoi also commended the commitment of the City Mayor for putting in enough finance for the implementation of the program.

Sierra Leone Health Minister Austin Dembay (MD) also praised Ethiopia's early childhood development program being implemented in Addis Ababa. "The development program will be used as an example for other African cities too," he opined.

Mayor Adanech also said that Early Childhood Development program is being implemented with special attention. At the capital, there are a number of opportunities in the city that enable children to get comprehensive early childhood care.

Mentioning that the City Administration has been providing meals to students per day and working to improve the livelihood of children, the Mayor confirmed that her office will continue capitalizing on and sustaining works and to develop the coming generation.

Following the conclusion of the visit, Former Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Demeke Mekonnen gave an explanation regarding the implementation of Sekota Declaration during his leadership that aims to eradicate the problem of stunting.

Since then the prevalence of stunting among children are showing significant progress despite many more activities are remaining.

In this regard, he urged African brothers to work together to bring about change in preventing stunting from the continent.

The visit was accompanied by Mayor of Addis Ababa Adanech Abiebie, Health Minister, Mekdes Daba and other high ranking government officials as well as development partners and donors.

The City Administration is undertaking numerous activities that will improve the lives of children in the capital

proper and healthy development. We have seen how much the Mayor of Addis Ababa has invested with the government on these children. The program enabled us to see how good parenting contributes to the wellbeing of the child,"

She also reflected her happiness for being part of the leadership exchange program where they witnessed children playing so happily on the street. "I would definitely replicate that in my city," she added.

Minister in Charge of Health in Nairobi, Suzanne Silantoi also said that it is very impressive what Ethiopia has been able to do in terms of early childhood development.

The main approach across Africa has always been through education, and the stages actually between zeros to two years old are

International News

Iran's President Ebrahim Raisi killed in helicopter crash

DUBAI - Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi, seen as a potential successor to Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, was killed in a helicopter crash in mountainous terrain near the Azerbaijan border, officials and state media said on Monday.

The charred wreckage of the helicopter which crashed on Sunday carrying Raisi, Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian and six other passengers and crew was found early on Monday after an overnight search in blizzard conditions.

"President Raisi, the foreign minister and all the passengers in the helicopter were killed in the crash," a senior Iranian official told Reuters, asking not to be named because of the sensitivity of the matter.

Raisi's death was later confirmed in a statement on social media by Vice President Mohsen Mansouri and on state television.

Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who holds ultimate power with a final say on foreign policy and Iran's nuclear programme, expressed his condolences for the "martyrdom" of Raisi and his companions, state media reported.

Khamenei had earlier sought to reassure Iranians, saying there would be no disruption to state affairs.

Iran's three branches of government held an extraordinary meeting on Monday with First Vice President Mohammad Mokhber, who is expected to take over as president, representing the executive branch, Iran's Judiciary news agency Mizan reported.

If a president dies in office, under the Islamic Republic's constitution the first vice president takes over for an interim period of 50 days, with the approval of the Supreme Leader.

A new presidential election would be held at the end of the 50 days.

The crash comes at a time of growing dissent within Iran over an array of political, social and economic crises. Iran's clerical rulers face international pressure over Tehran's disputed nuclear programme and its deepening military ties with Russia during the war in Ukraine.



Since Iran's ally Hamas attacked Israel on Oct. 7, provoking Israel's assault on Gaza, conflagrations involving Iran-aligned groups have erupted throughout the Middle East.

State media reported that images from the site showed the U.S.-made Bell 212 helicopter slammed into a mountain peak, although there was no official word on the cause of the crash. The dead also included the governor of East Azerbaijan Province and a senior imam from Tabriz city.

An Israeli official told Reuters it was not involved in the crash. "It wasn't us," said the official, who requested anonymity.

The helicopter went down in Varzeqan region north of Tabriz, state news agency IRNA reported, as Raisi returned from an official visit to the border with Azerbaijan in Iran's northwest.

Raisi, 63, was elected president in 2021, and since taking office has ordered a tightening of morality laws, overseen a bloody crackdown

on anti-government protests and pushed hard in nuclear talks with world powers.

Messages of condolences came from Iran's regional neighbours including the leaders of Syria, Egypt, India, Iraq and Pakistan, as well as the European Union, Italy and Russia.

Iran-backed militant group Hamas, fighting Israeli forces in Gaza with Tehran's support, issued a statement expressing sympathy to the Iranian people for "this immense loss."

Lebanon's Iran-backed Hezbollah group and the Houthi rebels in Yemen also issued statements praising Raisi and mourning his death.

Meanwhile, the exiled opposition group, the National Council of Resistance of Iran, described his death in a statement as a "monumental and irreparable strategic blow" to the Islamic Republic.

Rescue teams fought blizzards and difficult terrain through the night to reach the wreckage in the early hours of Monday.

"With the discovery of the crash site, no signs of life have been detected among the helicopter's passengers," the head of Iran's Red Crescent, Pirhossein Kolivand, told state TV.

Earlier, the national broadcaster had stopped all regular programming to show prayers being held for Raisi across the country.

Video showed a rescue team, wearing bright jackets and head torches, huddled around a GPS device as they searched a pitch-black mountainside on foot in a blizzard.

Several countries had earlier expressed concern and offered assistance.

The White House said U.S. President Joe Biden had been briefed on reports about the crash. China said it was deeply concerned. The European Union offered emergency satellite mapping technology.

In Iran's dual political system, split between the clerical establishment and the government, it is Raisi's 85-year-old mentor Khamenei, supreme leader since 1989, who holds decision-making power on all major policies.

For years, many have seen Raisi as a strong contender to succeed Khamenei, who has endorsed Raisi's main policies. Raisi's victory in a closely managed election in 2021 brought all branches of power under the control of hardliners, after eight years when the presidency had been held by pragmatist Hassan Rouhani and a nuclear deal negotiated with powers including Washington.

However, Raisi's standing may have been dented by widespread protests against clerical rule and a failure to turn around Iran's economy, hamstrung by Western sanctions.

Raisi had been at the Azerbaijani border on Sunday to inaugurate the Qiz-Qalasi Dam, a joint project. Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev, who said he had bid a "friendly farewell" to Raisi earlier in the day, had offered assistance in the rescue.

Source: *Zawya.com*

Sharing real-life stories to encourage global action against antimicrobial resistance

Since their discovery a century ago, antimicrobial medicines – including antibiotics, antifungals, antivirals, and antiparasitics – have significantly extended average life expectancy. Every day, these essential medicines save millions of lives. Until they don't.

Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) occurs when bacteria, viruses, fungi and parasites no longer respond to antimicrobial medicines. As a result, antibiotics and other antimicrobial medicines become ineffective, making infections harder or impossible to treat and increasing the risk of disease spread, severe illness, and death.

The situation is more critical than it appears.

AMR is directly responsible for 1.3 million deaths and contributes to 5 million deaths every year. But this is just the start. AMR

also threatens our economic future, with an estimated global annual cost of up to US\$3.4 trillion by 2030 and 28 million people pushed to poverty by 2050.

But what does it really mean?

Behind every number, there is real, human cost.

Limited treatment options, extended hospital stays, constant medication, prolonged loss of income, medical debt, poverty, family loss, grief... The burden keeps adding up, and lives are seriously impacted, in some cases fatally.

It can happen to anyone, anywhere. Even if you're in good health, a minor injury, routine surgery, or a common lung infection could unexpectedly escalate into a life-threatening situation. For those with pre-existing conditions like cancer, HIV, or diabetes, an untreatable infection could emerge as a

dangerous second threat, striking when least expected.

Speaking out against AMR

Antimicrobial resistance is invisible, but its victims are not. 12 survivors and advocates share their stories, urging awareness and action to stop AMR in its tracks.

A global challenge for public health and food security

AMR poses a threat to global health, food security, and achieving the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. AMR puts a strain on health systems by diminishing the effectiveness of treatments, leading to prolonged illnesses and increased healthcare costs. Simultaneously, AMR poses a threat to food security as it can spread through the food chain, impacting both animal and human health and causing economic losses in the

agricultural sector.

Similar to COVID-19, drug-resistant infections know no borders. And no single country or individual can fight AMR alone.

Together, we should ensure the international community sets ambitious goals during high-level meetings on AMR and that countries allocate sufficient resources to meet AMR national action plans.

By sharing real-life experiences of AMR, we aim to illustrate its tangible impact and promote global action. WHO urges governments, NGOs, civil society groups, youth and student organizations, universities, healthcare professionals, private stakeholders and media to act and engage local communities in raising awareness around this global health crisis.

Source: *WHO*

Planet Earth

Nature, Forest - Centerpiece of Ethiopia, Norway's cooperation

BY GIRMACHEW GASHAW

As it is geographically located in the East Africa region, Ethiopia is benefiting from export trade especially from European countries, which provide raw agricultural materials.

Despite the benefits gained from these countries, the East Africa region, including Ethiopia, is severely exposed to carbon gas emission from the giant industries of Western countries.

However, unless the two continents cooperate, they will continue to be hampered by the increasing impacts of climate change. For example, huge industries in European countries may shut down due to raw material shortages, leading to bankruptcy. This reality binds European countries with East African countries, especially Ethiopia.

With a total population of over 120 million people, Ethiopia has been making strides against climate change through various programs. Through its Green Legacy initiative implemented since 2019, the country has exceeded its goal of planting 20 million trees within four years by planting over 25 million saplings.

This success was achieved through public participation and government commitment, with support from partners in the area.

In 2021, as part of Ethiopia's updated Nationally Determined Contribution under the Paris Agreement, the government announced ambitious emission cuts and commitments, including reducing emissions by 68 percent by 2030 and reforesting and restoring up to 15 million hectares.

Norway has been a key supporter of Ethiopia's Green Legacy programs, maintaining a strong relationship in the battle against climate change since the launch of the Climate Resilient Green Economy Strategy in Durban in 2011. An agreement was signed in February 2024 at Addis Ababa University to strengthen the partnership between Norway and Ethiopia on climate change and environmental issues.

The agreement focuses on reducing greenhouse gas emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, conserving forest carbon stocks, sustainable forest management, and enhancing forest carbon stocks



In the signing ceremony Minister of State for Planning and Development Dr. Seyum Mekonnen, Ahmed Shidie, Minister of Finance, Dr. Girma Amente, Minister of Agriculture, President of Addis Ababa University Dr. Samuel Kifle, Norwegian Minister of Climate and Environment, Andreas Eriksen, invited ambassadors and representatives of UNDP were present.



Mari Martinsen, an adviser of Climate, Environment, and Forest at the Norwegian Embassy

(REDD+). It aims to promote sustainable development, protect the country's natural environment, and enhance climate resilience in line with Ethiopia's national contributions, green economy strategy, and low-emission development strategy.

During the event at Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia's Agriculture Minister Girma Amente (PhD) expressed the agreement's potential to achieve sustainable development goals and Ethiopia's commitment to fighting climate change.

Minister of Finance Ahmed Shidie emphasized the partnership's

importance in addressing climate change and reducing poverty in Ethiopia.

Norwegian Climate and Environment Minister Andreas Eriksen highlighted the agreement's role in reducing climate change internationally and in Ethiopia. Norway's support of \$75 million for Ethiopia's forestry work was a significant contribution to Ethiopia's efforts.

Mari Martinsen, an adviser of Climate, Environment, and Forest at the Norwegian Embassy, emphasized the importance of protecting forests for a sustainable future and combating climate change. She commended Ethiopia's ambitious plan to halt deforestation while ensuring food production and alternative livelihoods for forest-dependent communities.

Norway's International Climate and Forest Initiative has supported Ethiopia in protecting natural forests and rehabilitating degraded landscapes to promote food production and restore water sources.

Norway also promotes innovative practices and provides satellite images to monitor forests and take action.

The partnership between Norway and Ethiopia demonstrates a shared commitment to green development and

climate action. Norway will continue to support Ethiopia's efforts in climate change mitigation, forestry, and food security until 2030, allowing Ethiopia to access carbon credits and other financial resources.

The agreement will strengthen Ethiopia's forest development and biodiversity protection, building on successful initiatives like the Green Legacy program. Norway's ongoing support for Ethiopia's climate and biodiversity protection efforts reflects a shared commitment to green development and climate resilience.

Given the threat of climate change to biodiversity and future generations, comprehensive support is essential from all parties. Norway's commitment to supporting Ethiopia's climate-related efforts until 2030 ensures continued progress in forestry development, climate change mitigation, and food security.

The partnership agreement will enable Ethiopia to access carbon credits and other financial resources, further enhancing its efforts in forest development and biodiversity protection. Ethiopia's success in biodiversity protection positions it as a global leader, with two of the 36 areas worldwide showing notable achievements in this area.