



Bahir Dar set to launch corridor dev't project

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

ADDIS ABABA - Bahir Dar City Administration Environment Protection and Beautification Office announced that it has set to launch a corridor development project in the coming June.

Office Head Abraham Worku told the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that preparations are being finalized to commence a corridor development project in the coming June with a 2.5 billion Birr worth initial capital.

The project is designed to connect the recently built Abbay Dam, Abbay River and Lake Tana while encompassing two main roads covering 24 kilometers, he said.

According to him, there is a commitment to launch the project that will be underway in six sub-cities this June and finalize it in a short period of time.

The Head expressed that the corridor development project comprises recreational centers, green areas, parking lots, bicycle lanes, electricity, telecom, traffic cameras, and water and sewerage facilities among

others.

The project would be undertaken considering youth job creation especially addressing residents' challenges and activities that would ensure urban beautification and cleanliness.

Furthermore, the corridor development would make Bahir Dar suitable for residents and competitive with other cities, he said, adding that investors, development partners and all sections of communities can put their legacy in the corridor development process, Abraham urged.

Addis selected to host ID4 AGM 2025

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

ADDIS ABABA -Addis Ababa has been unveiled as the host of Africa's biggest identity gathering, the African General Meeting (AGM), in twelve months' time from May 20 to 24, 2025.

The choice was disclosed on Day 2 of the AGM in Cape Town, putting an end to what the movement's executive chairman, Joseph Atick(PhD), described jokingly as "one of the worst kept secrets."

Before unveiling the decision, Atick quickly explained that competition for the hosting right was fierce as all the six shortlisted countries met almost all the laid down criteria.

"For 2025, there were six finalists, with many of them coming very close to each other, except that one little thing was missing. However, we came out with a clear-cut choice because we thought this country fully satisfied all the requirements we were looking for. But the other ones are not losers," said Atick, addressing a packed and dead silent auditorium.

He went on: "The selection of the host country is not a simple task. It starts a year and a half in advance. We look at many factors including the political will, infrastructure, and also whether the country is supportive of the digital identity agenda, and the yearly Identity Day initiative."

Taking the floor to deliver an acceptance speech after the announcement, an Ethiopian government representative expressed exceeding gratitude to



ID4Africa for the honor and promised that they'll work to exceed expectations by offering delegates the best of comfort and hospitality.

"It is a great honor as we accept this task. It is a huge honor for us. We are humbled by the trust you have placed in us to host the global identity community. It is a testament to our unwavering commitment to the identity agenda," the official said.

"It [the AGM] will coincide with Ethiopia's 2025 digital strategy. We will ensure a

successful hosting of the event. It will be a unique assembly, and we'll give a diverse flavor to the AGM. We shall exceed expectations and we won't let you down."

Biometric Update intends to cover the proceedings from live on location, as it has for nearly all past ID4Africa AGMs.

In March, Ethiopia hosted the first edition of MOSIP Connect, an event that rallied major players in the digital identity space for three days in Addis Ababa, it was learned.

COHESA, Africa CDC pledge support to Ethiopia's health goals

BY MESERET BEHAILU

ADDIS ABABA—Capacitating One Health in Eastern and Southern Africa (COHESA) and Africa CDC expressed support to Ethiopia to bring meaningful results in ending One Health (OH) problems.

Arusha Tanzania-based International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI) Senior Scientist Theo Knight-Jones told *The Ethiopian Herald* that COHESA will continue supporting Ethiopia to address animals, humans, and environmental health challenges. By doing this, the program aims to close the government's gaps through employing a multi-sectoral approach.

The scientist further highlighted the need to harmonize efforts with the education sector, which has been contributing to curb humans, animals and environmental health challenges.

"Various countries have been joining forces to address the aforementioned three areas of health problems. Ethiopia is on the right track to manage the contamination of food, humans, animals, and the environment and moves quickly though a lot remains to be done in this regard."

According to him, establishing a viable structure and providing health education and training would play a critical role in addressing the health challenges and bringing better results in the area.

Africa CDC Antimicrobial-Resistant Program Technical Officer Mola Gudif for his part said that the African continent is still facing different diseases whilst most of them are transmitted. "To address the health challenges and bring Africans together for better achievements, an integrated approach should be a priority."

The Africa CDC is helping the OH approach through education and research. In this regard, building the capacity of health professionals, encouraging community-level awareness, and raising the policymaker's understanding of the problem are listed under education.

Also, the Africa CDC has been identifying gaps, increasing the body of evidence, encouraging intervention, and informing policymakers to bring better results in addressing the OH challenges and upholding Ethiopia's commendable progress in the issue, Molla remarked.

Editorial

Opinion

Pioneering in food safety from the farm to the fork

However fecund Africa proves to be famous for being bountiful in natural resources, it has become a continent for which food self-sufficiency has become an uphill battle.

Though several undercurrent factors are ascribable for this grim reality, the overarching reasons reside in sluggishness to outgrow antediluvian farming techniques and failure to aggressively pursue modern agricultural practices.

In particular, the problem is attributable to the absence of enduring peace posing a formidable challenge.

Recourse to firearms instead of an amicable way of resolving differences has forced the continent to pay heavily.

Simply focusing on education to rectify the deficiency in thought may not work. There is a need to zero on consuming nutritious foods, for the practice there was begging for a remedial solution.

On the other hand, the absence of a coordinated effort is accountable for the problem.

Policies, strategies, and procedures that allow food safety are being prepared. As an important part of food safety and ensuring the health and well-being of consumers, food hygiene is the practice of handling, preparing, and storing food to prevent foodborne illnesses. Recently, in Ethiopia, a five-year roadmap to such effect was made official.

Ethiopia is among the nations the African Union (AU) Commission nominated for countries' food safety roadmap under the framework of Africa.

Aside from parrying food self-insufficiency, the blueprint is believed to go a long way in curbing the lack of food-safety-related side effects and pollution that result in spikes in illnesses and death rates. This move is believed to spare many Africans subject to the problem mentioned above.

Annually in Africa, about one hundred million people fall ill due to foods the safety of which is not warranted. Owing to this, among the one hundred thousand people who cease to be worldwide due to the aforementioned problem annually, above 33 per cent of them are Africans. What is saddening is 40 percent of these victims are children under five.

Pertaining to this, to address the problem sustainably apart from spearheading the translation into action of the African Trade Zone AU sees to it that African countries click with the union of African aflatoxin control.

As a member of AU, Ethiopia strives to the realization of the continent's 2063 set goals. Ethiopia is noted for rural development and tapping water resources for common and sustainable growth.

A pioneer, in bringing into play a roadmap on national food safety, Ethiopia has set precedence and displayed commitment towards its implementation. The roadmap also portrays the statute Ethiopia cuts currently.

But for the materialization of the roadmap, a coordinated action is called for from all stakeholders. In particular, the chemistry and coordination of institutions is decisive.

It is hardly possible to ensure the safety of foods solely focusing on factories. There is a need to focus from the farm to the fork, for there are apparent problems in agricultural products that result in health-related problems. All along the asset chain that is from the seeds to packed or otherwise edible agricultural products ensuring the safety of foods is obligatory.

The preparation of the roadmap draws the attention of stakeholders to the necessity and significance of roadmaps.

Hence, utilizing the favorable situation the roadmap ushered in, we have to roll up our sleeves to ward off mortality arising from laxity in ensuring food safety.

European countries should strengthen climate financing

BY EPHREM ANDARGACHEW

Following the political reforms in mid-2018, Ethiopia has reiterated and demonstrated its strong commitment to combating the detrimental effects of climate change through numerous means. For example, the Green Legacy program is worthy of notice.

The initiative is a government-led environmental program designed to stop deforestation and encourage reforestation in the nation. The goal was to plant 20 billion tree seedlings between 2019 and 2022, but the nation has already planted 25 billion, increasing the amount of land covered by forests.

Taking lessons from the positive impact of the initiative, Ethiopia also launched the second phase of the Green Legacy Initiative in 2022. The second phase focuses on planting trees, caring for them, and maintaining them to ensure their survival and long-term influence on the ecosystem. To create a more extensive and long-term forestry endeavor, the second phase also aims to involve other stakeholders in tree-planting initiatives, such as businesses, civil society organizations, and schools.

As a result, the initiative has inspired similar tree-planting programs in other countries and contributed to worldwide conversations about the role of reforestation in combating climate change. Hence, the program has had a huge influence not just in Ethiopia, but also in East Africa, raising awareness and mobilizing action.

The initiative does not apply exclusively to Ethiopia. Since the beginning of the inaugural Green Legacy Initiative in 2019, the government has made substantial efforts to prepare and supply diverse tree seedlings to its neighboring countries. For example, Ethiopia plans to distribute 356 million seedlings to Sudan, 79 million to Eritrea, 9 million to Djibouti, 80 million to Somalia, 30 million to Somaliland, 100 million to Kenya and Uganda, 19 million to Puntland, and 136 million to Rwanda. These countries, in turn, recognize its relevance in mitigating the consequences of climate change in a sustainable way.

Accordingly, since its inception, the initiative has received national and international attention and support, with millions of Ethiopians taking part in tree-planting activities. The initiative is part of Ethiopia's larger attempt to combat climate change and promote sustainable development. Furthermore, other nations, organizations, and individuals have shown their support for the effort, contributing to its success. For example, the United Nations, the African Union, and other international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have praised Ethiopia's efforts and given their support for the program.

For example, in September 2022, UNDP revealed its intention to share the Green Legacy Initiative's successes

and experiences with around ten nations. The initiative advances the Pan-African agenda by setting the pace in combating climate change and building community resilience. Aside from combating the harmful consequences of climate change, the program aims to improve regional collaboration.

Other European nations, notably the European Union (EU), have urged and shown support for the plan. European nations, particularly members of the European Union (EU), have led efforts to tackle climate change. The EU has set lofty goals for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, increasing renewable energy sources, and improving energy efficiency. The EU's dedication to these objectives is evident in initiatives like the European Green Deal, which seeks to make Europe the first climate-neutral continent by 2050.

European governments have also actively promoted reforestation and afforestation programs as part of their climate change mitigation measures. Countries such as Germany, France, and Sweden have established tree-planting projects to enhance forest cover and trap carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.

Furthermore, European nations have played an important role in promoting global efforts such as the Paris Agreement, which aims to keep global warming to far below 2°C. Many European nations have offered financial support to assist developing countries in adapting to climate change and transitioning to low-carbon economies.

Accordingly, Ethiopia's Green Legacy Initiative may complement the European Union's and its member states' continued commitment to mitigating the negative consequences of climate change by emphasizing sustainability, community engagement, and long-term benefits. During the first phase of the Green Legacy Initiative, Ethiopia played a significant role in raising community involvement in tree-planting activities and disseminating information about the benefits of reforestation.

Ethiopia's efforts also gained public attention and prompted widespread participation. Several countries and international organizations have also contributed financial and technical aid to Ethiopia's reforestation efforts. This assistance has been critical in allowing the initiative to expand its tree-planting efforts and apply sustainable forestry methods.

As a result, European countries and the EU have to invest more time and money into enhancing Ethiopia's Green Legacy initiatives. Through their national policies, international collaboration, and funding for initiatives like Ethiopia's Green Legacy Initiative, European nations, particularly the EU, play a critical role in the fight against climate change. Their dedication to sustainability and leadership are crucial in tackling the pressing issues brought on by climate change.



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Japan's business...

JICA Ethiopia Office Chief Representative Kensuke Oshima indicated that there is a growing desire among Japanese investors to explore Ethiopia's market. Some Japanese companies have already commenced operations in different sectors.

The chief representative also stated that JICA has been playing its due role in particularly convincing Japanese investors that have shown interest to take part in Ethiopia's priority sectors. The agency has also been working relentlessly for the furtherance of the two countries' business ties.

Moreover, JICA has extended support to attract the engagement of large Japanese companies to Ethiopia's industrial sector.

"Our main target is fostering Ethio-Japan cooperation while focusing in priority sectors including agriculture, industrial development and others. I understand the Ethiopian government is focusing on transforming the agriculture led economy to industry one."

Capitalized on Japan's rich experience in the sector, the agency has been supporting Ethiopia to improve rice production and productivity. JICA has made a huge contribution in doubling the rice production in Africa including Ethiopia within 20 years.

Oshima further highlighted that JICA has been still supporting the agriculture sector, but it has been channeling the focus to the manufacturing industry. Now, the agency has given prime attention to the rehabilitation of conflict-affected areas and it is ready to share Japan's experience for Ethiopia to push economic development and expedite the reconstruction activities.

By the same token, JICA has been supporting small-scale farmers in different ways to increase their income level. As a result, the income of farmers has been increasing significantly and fortunately, some 80,000 farmers doubled their level of income without any subsidies from the government

in Amhara and Oromia states, he pointed out.

"This is a big success that JICA brought to Ethiopia's agriculture sector over the past five years. Ethiopia's progress hinges on the development of industrialization. As part of it, the agency is introducing a productivity improvement program, the Kaizen philosophy, to Ethiopia."

The continuation of industrial development practices, particularly in expanding the implementation of Kaizen at work places, is among the issues JICA has given priority.

The success Ethiopia has registered in implementing Kaizen philosophy at workplaces is the manifestation of the strong relation between the country and the agency, the chief representative remarked.

Japan is among Ethiopia's strategic partners that have a special role in disseminating the Kaizen philosophy in the country's industrial sector.

Ambassador pins...

Ambassador Jung also stated that the summit aims to catalyze a significant expansion of cooperation between his country and the African continent under the principle of mutual benefits and growth. To achieve the AU Agenda 2063 and Korea's vision of serving as a 'Global Pivotal State,' both parties share important values and aspirations that serve as the cornerstone for elevating their strategic partnership.

"In the summit, Korea is eager to share its wealth of experience with all African counterparts, exemplifying the true value of unity and facilitating Africa's proactive strides towards a promising future. In the summit, 50 African Countries and African based International Organizations are expected to attend."

According to him, the Korea-Africa Summit will serve as a platform to explore innovative solutions tailored to the needs of both sides and yield tangible, result-oriented outcomes plus will bring together government officials and business leaders to explore various avenues. Also, the event will connect African businesspersons with relevant Korean counterparts and foster genuine investment opportunities.

South Korea aspires to forge mutual growth with African countries by boosting trade and investment, addressing global challenges including food security, climate change, and public health as well as advancing sustainable energy, infrastructural connectivity, education, science and technology, digital transformation and

promoting peace and security.

Moreover, the Ministry of Education's Global Korea Scholarship (GKS) provides the opportunity to African students to enroll in South Korean higher education institutions at both undergraduate and graduate levels. In 2022, there were 549 African students in South Korea of which 82 were under GKS.

South Korea- Africa trade volume shows an increase from 1.6 billion USD in 1987 to 29 Billion USD in 2022, according to the embassy.

Ambassador Jung further highlighted his government's pledges to double its Official Development Assistance (ODA) to Africa by 2030.

Africa Day...

been immensely developed, diversified and enriched, but its economy has also grown at rates envied by many parts of the world.

"Africa's resilience during the global COVID 19 crisis impressed many. We pay tribute to the Africa CDC that had made a major contribution to our successful Continental Response."

According to Mahamat, Africa's demographic explosion, its social constraints that are resistant to the demands of the new world and the various forms of foreign interference in its internal affairs, the permeability of certain categories of its elites to foreign discourse, and shortcomings in terms of governance, have not helped to transform the above-mentioned positive assets into factors of social justice, equality and inclusive prosperity.

Addressing youth and the women of Africa, the AUC Chairperson indicated that liberation, and progress in development and integration are now a reality. "This has been the result of the vision and leadership of the founding fathers and current leaders, but also and above all, of your mobilization by the hundreds of millions across the Continent, your many sacrifices, your unshakeable endurance to ensure that the sun shines and warms planet Africa."

Emphasizing that peace and security are the solution to the crises that are ravaging some of African countries, he underlined that terrorism, degradation, youth and female unemployment, migration, the retreat of democratic values, unconstitutional changes of government, all these require a real increase in mobilization, sacrifices and coherent struggles to put a definitive end to all of these evils.

"The Organization of African Unity, born of the pain of our struggles, now finds itself at a real crossroads. We must reform resolutely and courageously to become what our founding fathers wanted us to be, which is, a powerful lever for unity, liberation, integration and the defense of African dignity in relation to ourselves but also in relation to others."

With the youth making up over 60% of Africa's population, tens of millions of hectares of arable land, water, fisheries, mining and energy resources, Africa's young people cannot and should not be satisfied with development on the cheap.

"The legitimate aspirations of inclusive and shared prosperity in a peaceful, integrated Africa, as set out in Agenda 2063 that is the dream that I share, with all my heart, with all

of you," the Chairperson stated.

Expressing his heartfelt congratulations on the occasion of African Day, Russian President Vladimir Putin stated that the day is the symbol of the victory of the peoples of the African continent over colonialism, and of their aspirations for freedom, peace, and prosperity.

"African countries have achieved generally recognized success in the economic and social spheres, and are now playing an increasingly important role in addressing key issues of the international agenda."

President Putin pointed out that the AU and a number of sub-regional structures are expanding constructive cooperation, developing mechanisms for collective response to local conflicts and crises, as well as consistently promoting integration processes. Thus, Russia attaches particular importance to strengthening friendly relations with its African partners.

"We share the aspiration to build a just multipolar world order based on true equality and the rule of international law free from any forms of discrimination, diktat or sanctions," he remarked.

China's ...

businesspersons have operated investment projects surpassing the five billion USD mark during last year, a senior diplomat said.

Minister Consular of the Chinese Embassy in Addis Ababa Yang Yihang (PhD) stated that Chinese government and private businesses are operating almost 2,000 projects in Ethiopia and creating 65,000 jobs. The amount of the investment has also surpassed five billion USD in 2023.

Also, the total number of Chinese enterprises operating in Ethiopia reached about 500 and plus.

The business portfolio is expected to be higher as the FDI inflow from China to Ethiopia is increasing from time to time. "In a single year, i.e., in 2023, Chinese enterprises produced 223 new products in Ethiopia."

According to the diplomat, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) and Chinese President Xi Jinping's agreement to elevate the two countries' relations to all weather cooperation is of great significance in invigorating the businesses-to-business ties."

"The transformation of Ethio-China ties to all weather diplomatic cooperation is also a significant move making more investments. The future cooperation will be better as improvements are growing."

Yihang (PhD) further highlighted that Ethiopia is an important player in the China-Africa cooperation and the second China Africa forum was held in Addis Ababa showcasing its role in bridging China with the rest of the continent. China-Africa cooperation projects are also being supported by Ethiopia,

Under the guidance of Forum on China-Africa Cooperation-FOCAC, China and Ethiopia have made great breakthrough achievements. Renewable energy, agriculture and the manufacturing industry are major sectors that the two countries are working together.

The number of Ethiopian products entering into the Chinese market is growing at a rate of 46 percent annually, the Minister Consular remarked.

For his part, the Institute of Foreign Affairs Asia and Pacific Affairs Director General Anteneh Getachew (PhD) stated that the FDI flow from China is growing and supporting Ethiopia's economy.

The expert, however, emphasized the need to make a trade balance between the two countries.

Opinion

Fresh impetus to promote Africa's cause-BRICS

BY MENGESHA AMARE

It is well attested that forging wealth together, coming up with a solicited socio-economic power and amalgamating some other development and growth ingredients would be of instrumental in creating alternative financial sources and paving avenues to bring about change in all aspects. This is what many countries of the world are doing right now. The case of BRICS is a living proof in this regard, indeed!

Such a viable trek has been well entertained by many nations of the world. The case of BRICS which has recently attracted Ethiopia and some others has provided nations with more development opportunities and cooperation platforms for East African countries. Besides, the move strengthens the economic and political ties between Ethiopia and East Africa through promoting regional stability as Ethiopia has been a more specialized diplomatic position in Africa. A joint force strategy which is meticulously entertained by members of the BRICS would be a viable means to achieve sustainable development, offer state of giving prompt services, combine resources and reach a common goal of attaining optimal global benefits and seize a competitive power.

It is easy for the members of the bloc to provide services effectively, work toward a common objective—growing together—overcoming all sorts of potential challenges in terms of dealing with myriads of social, economic and even political hurdles. Obviously, there is increasing recognition that individual nation services don't need to have separate and self-contained combat capability against poverty and underdevelopment. However, if they have come together and are in a state of creating capacity to deal with any form of challenges together, it would be easy for them to attain the intended target.

When seen historically, BRIC was born in 2006 to Brazil, Russia, India and China and South Africa joined in 2010, and the name was renamed as BRICS. The group was designed to bring together the world's most important developing countries, to challenge the political and economic power of the wealthier nations of North America and Western Europe.

As a new member of BRICS, Ethiopia offers extensive market and investment opportunities to other BRICS nations. Additionally, it has engaged in cooperation with other BRICS countries in agriculture, water resources, and infrastructure development with a view to achieving positive results. The announcement of 2023 BRICS Summit in Johannesburg to embrace Ethiopia as its member was phenomenal to the country. It is well remembered that Ethiopia was recently warmly welcomed into the steadily expanding bloc comprising Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. That monumental event signaled a coming of age for Africa's second most

populous nation—ancient Ethiopia—on the global stage.

No question about it, Ethiopia's BRICS membership heralds a new era brimming with potential. Beside, BRICS membership signifies growing recognition of Ethiopia's immense economic, social, political and cultural potential, in fact. With over 120 million people and massive growth in recent years, Ethiopia offers a strategic gateway between Africa, the Middle East and Asia. The bloc has been empowering member states via reinvigorating cooperation and reformed multilateralism among themselves. Ethiopia will also benefit much out of the merge as it would have ample opportunity to well exploit its untapped resources ranging from young, energetic, dynamic and productive workforce to intensive infrastructure development and ever flourishing socio-economic trajectory that would potentially enhance even regional connectivity.

For Ethiopia, joining BRICS can catalyze technology transfers, market access, and financing for impactful projects. Yes, in interdependent world, collectivity is essential to solve shared problems via leveraging new BRICS membership, and member nations are poised to deliver prosperity for their people and assume leadership role on the global stage.

Ethiopia is in turn poised to reap major rewards from its new membership in the BRICS bloc of emerging economies, and it is predicted that BRICS membership will open Ethiopia to more foreign investment and trade opportunities with some of the world's fastest growing markets. Ethiopia's ambitious infrastructure investments enhance connections with other BRICS economies. Interestingly, BRICS membership showcases Ethiopia's diplomatic capital and economic potential, and access to the BRICS nations will significantly accelerate Ethiopia's GDP growth. However, Ethiopia must ensure that it gets maximum economic benefit through sustainable trade and investment.

Unequivocally, BRICS can diversify economic opportunities and foster Ethiopia's development. Being Africa's second most populous nation, Ethiopia would provide BRICS with access to an enormous marketplace.

This country geographically occupies a strategic position in the Horn of Africa near vital Red Sea trading routes. Besides, its geography gives BRICS a gateway to project influence in Africa and the Middle East. As a strong traditional advocate for Africa, Ethiopia's membership to BRICS will give it fresh impetus to promote Africa's cause. As an ancestral home of humanity, Ethiopia provides cultural roots that run deep and brings it to BRICS an ancient yet vibrant civilization with unique traditions.

Furthermore, Ethiopia gains privileged access to the massive markets and investors from BRICS nations. The undeniable fact along this line is that Ethiopia is very important from a geopolitical point of view.

Owing to its large population, its economy has the potential to grow strongly in the future, too.

For the BRICS group to benefit from such a development, Ethiopia must first solve its economic problems; has to meet its heavy foreign debt and rising inflation so as to well facilitate the journey towards real growth and progress along with other BRICS members.

One of the founding thoughts of the BRICS was to counter Western dominance in international financial policy. Almost 10 years ago, they began setting up the New Development Bank (NDB) as an answer to the World Bank and the IMF. Once the NDB is fully functional, Ethiopia could benefit from new forms of financing.

No doubt, Ethiopia's membership in the BRICS is an important milestone for the nation politically, economically, and in terms of international relations. Plus, there is no generosity as such in international politics and economics as every country is looking out for itself.

The membership will have a lot of impact in terms of international trade and the main agenda is to transform the multi-lateral system into some kind of an equitable system where countries will deal with each other on a sovereign basis. Here, Ethiopia's being part of BRICS means it has a huge amount of agricultural land, water tower of north East Africa where its rivers export over 120 billion cubic meters of water every year. So, the nation can develop its agricultural potential. Basically, as Brazil, Russia, China, India, and South Africa are all rich agricultural countries which are exporting food, Ethiopia can draw important lessons from its bloc-mates to make a difference in all aspects.

BRICS members can help this east African icon with investment, and they will have a kind of demand as part of the membership that they come and invest in this country. The main thing for saying the BRICS bloc can make a difference in the years to come is that China, India, Brazil, Russia, and South Africa have ranked among the world's fastest-growing and emerging market economies for years.

Beside, the main comparative advantage of this group is their low labor costs, favorable demographics, and abundant natural resources at the time of the global commodities boom. When this bloc has injected new blood like Ethiopia, the power of these member countries would be further reinvigorated and well established.

More importantly, the cooperation among the countries in the bloc would serve the common interests of the developing countries as well as the emerging market economies. In addition to the economic benefits, cooperation among the BRIC countries would also help build a world having harmony, peace, and shared prosperity. It is for this reason that it is recurrently heralded

that it is high time for Ethiopia to join the BRICS bloc and the country is the right member of the bloc.

Without a shadow of doubt, Ethiopia's BRICS membership heralds a new era brimming with potential. It also signifies growing recognition of Ethiopia's immense economic and political potential. For Ethiopia, joining BRICS can catalyze technology transfers, market access, and financing for impactful projects. Following its joining the bloc, Ethiopia has heightened its track record to the cause of Africa.

As a rising economy with regional prominence, Ethiopia is a country of promising future. The very thing here is Ethiopia also needs to carry out its homework at home. Reform activities which have been embarked on service rendering institutions should be intensified to ensure services that are rendered timely so as to meet international standards.

The country also needs to intensify the ongoing infrastructure development activities by leaps and bounds. It is now widely accepted that BRICS needs to move beyond a stage it is now to further attain many goals by instituting a variety of events and people-to-people exchanges.

In the slightly longer term, the BRICS nations need to collectively work towards a degree of standardization in educational programs and, if possible, to explore issues surrounding mutual recognition of each other's accreditation. The BRICS nations must collaborate in order to accelerate cross-border technology sharing and transfer. They should exchange information regarding intellectual property (IP) laws, which protect IP and at the same time encourage the adoption and diffusion of new technologies. Apart from the economic benefits of such actions, BRICS can also leverage collaborative understanding among one another.

In a nutshell, Ethiopia's addition to BRICS would boost the bloc's influence and international bargaining power, as it has been endowed with a number of untold tangible and intangible heritages, untapped resources, excessive human power and a range of tillable acres of lands to well expand agriculture, and it is the African nation that can add a market of 120 million people, which has made it the second-largest on the continent. Most definitely, such an invaluable assimilation will facilitate greater understanding and cooperation between Ethiopia and other BRICS member countries, fostering stronger ties and opportunities for further firm collaboration.

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

Business & Economy

Advancement of Ethiopian Airlines: Powering nation's aviation ambitions

BY LAKACHEW ATINAFU

As Africa's fastest-growing aviation group, the Ethiopian Airlines Group has become a shining example of Ethiopia's ambitions to cement its place as a major player in the global aviation industry. Founded in 1945, the state-owned flag carrier has undergone a remarkable transformation in recent decades, emerging as one of the continent's most successful and profitable airlines.

Many agree that at the heart of Ethiopian Airlines' success is its strategic location in Addis Ababa, which has positioned the carrier as a key hub connecting Africa to the rest of the world. The Airline's extensive network spans more than 127 international passenger and cargo destinations across five continents, making it a vital link for travelers and cargo moving in and out of the African continent.

"Ethiopian Airlines has capitalized on Ethiopia's geographic position to establish Addis Ababa as a premier global aviation hub. By continuously expanding our route network and fleet, we have been able to offer travelers seamless connectivity while also supporting the growth of trade and tourism in Ethiopia and across Africa." Tewolde GebreMariam, the group's Ex CEO said at a time.

The Airline's fleet of 134 modern and fuel-efficient aircrafts, including Boeing 787 Dreamliners and Airbus A350s, has been central to its expansion strategy. In 2019, the carrier took delivery of its 100th aircraft, cementing its position as Africa's largest airline by fleet size.

Beyond its core passenger business, the Ethiopian Airlines Group has also diversified into other aviation-related ventures, including aircraft maintenance, aviation academy, in-flight catering, and ground services. These subsidiaries have not only bolstered the group's revenue streams but also contributed to the development of Ethiopia's broader aviation ecosystem.

The group's success has also had a significant impact on Ethiopia's economic development. As the country's flag carrier and largest employer, Ethiopian Airlines has been instrumental in boosting tourism, facilitating trade, and supporting the growth of other industries. The airline's extensive global network has made it easier for businesses to access international markets, while its investments in infrastructure, such as the 362 million USD Skylight Hotel in Addis Ababa, have helped to attract more visitors to the country.

While talking about its multifaceted significance, former CEO of the Airline, Girma Wake, once said, "Ethiopian Airlines is not just an airline, but a strategic national asset that has played a crucial role in Ethiopia's economic transformation. Its success has been a source of immense national pride and a testament to the country's ambitions to become a leading aviation hub in Africa."

As the aviation industry continues to navigate



Newly expanded passengers' terminal - Photo, ENA

Ethiopian Airlines has a strong commitment to continue enhancing the development and expansion of domestic air transport, which is vital for both the social and economic development of the country

the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Ethiopian Airlines Group has remained well-positioned to capitalize on the eventual recovery. With its robust financial position, diverse business portfolio, and ambitious growth plans, the carrier is poised to cement its status as a dominant force in African aviation for years to come.

According to ENA's report, the Ethiopian Airlines Group has inaugurated its renovated and expanded Domestic Passenger Terminal on 18 May, 2024. During the occasion, the Ethiopian Airlines Group CEO, Mesfin Tassew said that the airline has spent 50 million USD for the renovation and expansion of the terminal, which increases its capacity by more than 100 %.

Beyond increasing its capacity, the goal of Ethiopian Airlines is to provide an international level of services to our domestic passengers, he said. This focus on passenger experience aligns with the airline's broader vision of solidifying Ethiopia's position as a global tourism destination. So, he added that it is their dream and vision to continue expanding their domestic air transport service for the benefit of Ethiopians and tourists who are coming to Ethiopia to visit the exciting destinations of the country.

"The renovation and expansion of the terminal was intended to cope up with the growing demand of domestic transport service. Ethiopian Airlines has a strong commitment to continue enhancing the development and expansion of domestic air transport, which is vital for both the social and economic development of the country. As you all are well informed, we are investing a lot to construct new airport runways at this time, we are constructing five runways and we're also upgrading terminal facilities in other domestic airports," the CEO elaborated.

On her part, Minister of Tourism, Nasisie Chali said that the inauguration of the renovated and expanded domestic passenger terminal is crucial for Ethiopia's image building and tourism expansion. Any such development efforts by Ethiopian Airlines have direct bearing on tourism sector of the country.

State Minister of Ethiopian Transport and Logistics, Bareo Hassen on his part said that Ethiopian Airlines is playing key role in the transport and logistics sector. The renovation and expansion of the terminal will increase its services and competition, he added.

Here are some key ways the Ethiopian Airlines Group is expected to further expand and become the preferred transportation option: Ethiopian Airlines plans to continue growing its fleet of modern and fuel-efficient aircrafts. This will allow it to expand its route network, increase frequencies, and provide a more comfortable passenger experience. The Airline is expected to take delivery of more Boeing 787 Dreamliners and Airbus A350s in the coming years.

The Airline aims to expand its route network to reach more destinations across Africa, as well as key international markets in Europe, Asia, and the Americas. This will enhance its position as a global connectivity hub, funneling more passengers and cargo through its Addis Ababa base.

In addition to its main hub in Addis Ababa, *The Ethiopian* is developing secondary hubs in cities like Lomé, Togo and Lilongwe, Malawi. It is also expanding its code share and joint venture partnerships to feed more traffic into its network.

The Airline Group continues to grow its non-airline businesses, including aircraft maintenance, aviation training, in-flight catering, and ground handling services. This diversification strengthens its revenue streams and makes it more resilient.

Investments in lounges, in-flight wifi, and other passenger amenities are aimed at enhancing the customer experience and making Ethiopian Airlines the preferred choice for travelers.

As part of its ambitious growth plans, The Ethiopian is focusing on reducing its environmental footprint through initiatives like fuel efficiency programs and the use of more sustainable aviation fuels. By executing on these strategic priorities, the Ethiopian Airlines Group is expected to solidify its position as Africa's leading aviation group and a global aviation powerhouse in the years ahead.

Planet Earth

A stride to boost agricultural productivity through irrigation schemes

BY FIKADU BELAY

Ethiopia's landscapes have a diverse and rich agricultural heritage. The country has long relied on irrigation farming as a crucial means of sustaining its population and driving economic growth. With its vast network of rivers, lakes, and underground water sources, Ethiopia possesses abundant water resources that have been harnessed through innovative irrigation systems to support agricultural production.

The irrigation farming system is not only a means of ensuring food security but also a catalyst for poverty reduction, rural development and environmental sustainability. By harnessing the power of water and optimizing its utilization, Ethiopia has transformed arid and semi-arid regions into productive agricultural zones, enabling farmers to cultivate crops year-round and improve their livelihoods. This has led to increased agricultural productivity, reduced dependence on rain-fed agriculture, and enhanced resilience in the face of climate change.

Moreover, Ethiopian farmers have embraced innovative farming techniques and technologies, adopting improved crop varieties, efficient irrigation practices and sustainable agricultural practices. Local communities actively participate in the planning, implementation and management of irrigation schemes, fostering a sense of ownership and ensuring their long-term sustainability. Furthermore, partnerships between the government, non-governmental organizations, and international agencies have facilitated knowledge sharing, capacity building, and the provision of financial resources, further bolstering the success of irrigation farming in Ethiopia.

The impact of irrigation farming in Ethiopia extends beyond agricultural production. It has contributed to rural electrification, agro-industrial development, job creation and export diversification, fostering economic growth and reducing poverty. Additionally, irrigation has played a crucial role in addressing gender inequalities by empowering women farmers and providing them with increased opportunities for income generation and active participation in decision-making processes.

The country's topographical diversity allows for the implementation of various irrigation methods, including surface irrigation, sprinkler irrigation, and drip irrigation, tailored to specific agro-ecological zones. Government initiatives and investments in infrastructure development, such as the construction of dams and irrigation networks, have played a vital role in expanding irrigation coverage and improving water management practices.

In an effort to revolutionize the agricultural



Ethiopian irrigation farming stands as a testament to human ingenuity and the transformative power of water

sector and enhance food security, Ethiopia's Ministry of Irrigation and Lowland has embarked on an ambitious plan to expand irrigation farming across the country. Buzuneh Tolcha, the Public Relations and Communication Executive of the ministry, recently provided an update on the progress made in this endeavor.

According to him, the ministry has been closely monitoring medium- and small-scale irrigation development projects in all regions of Ethiopia. Over the past nine months, an impressive 100,000 hectares of land have been prepared for irrigation, with the Ministry of Agriculture taking charge of the cultivation and sowing processes. He emphasized that the majority of the results

from ongoing projects will be recorded at the end of the fiscal year, as numerous federal and regional initiatives near completion.

Highlighting the potential for irrigation farming in Ethiopia, he mentioned that studies supported by the World Bank have indicated that a staggering 10 million hectares of land in the country can be cultivated through irrigation. Moreover, significant progress has already been made in recent years, with over 1.6 million hectares of land being made ready for development through the construction of irrigation infrastructure.

To further accelerate the expansion of irrigation farming, the Ministry of Irrigation and Lowland is currently overseeing the implementation of 28 irrigation infrastructure construction projects. In the current fiscal year, 12 projects have been partially completed, and plans are underway to prepare an additional 29,000 hectares of land for irrigation development.

He further disclosed that extensive research and design work has been conducted, with over 1.3 million hectares of land identified and prepared for future irrigation development projects. However, the actual construction of these projects will be contingent upon the availability of sufficient funds.

In the ongoing fiscal year, the ministry aims to prepare an impressive 353,630 hectares of land for irrigation through research and design activities. He noted that, thus far, more than 70,000 hectares of land have already been prepared for irrigation through these efforts. Currently, 25 irrigation development projects, including Erer, Loko Abaya, South Gode, and Lower Nganile, among others, are undergoing research and design processes, with completion expected by the end of the fiscal year.

While Ethiopian irrigation farming has witnessed remarkable achievements, challenges remain. Sustainable water management, equitable distribution of water resources, and conservation of

ecosystems are ongoing priorities. Climate change poses new threats, with changing rainfall patterns and increased water scarcity necessitating adaptive strategies and resilient irrigation systems.

Despite the remarkable progress made, he remarked that certain challenges have hindered the construction and research activities of irrigation development projects. In particular, conflicts in certain regions have resulted in the suspension of seven irrigation development projects, including the Zarima Mayday Dam. The construction of Upper Guder Lot 1 and 2, Kaza Irrigation Development Project Lot 1 and 2, Anger Irrigation Development Project Lot 1 and 2, Abat Bales, and Tana Bales has also been affected by these conflicts.

Compensation issues have also posed challenges to the implementation of irrigation projects. While farmers have willingly given up their land for these initiatives, the non-payment of compensation has exerted pressure on their livelihoods. He highlighted the Achata and Wybo areas as examples, expressing the ministry's commitment to addressing the issue and ensuring that farmers receive the compensation they deserve.

Another significant challenge faced by the ministry is the flood accident, which presents a major obstacle to the smooth progress of work. The flood, particularly in the Somali region, tends to linger for extended periods after heavy rainfall in the West Gode and Buldah areas, impeding the movement of machinery and hindering construction activities.

In response to these challenges, the government has taken proactive measures to ensure the safety and security of the project areas. The ministry has implemented regular support and monitoring procedures in various locations to bridge any visible gaps and maintain project momentum.

With a steadfast commitment to the expansion of irrigation farming, Ethiopia's Ministry of Irrigation and Lowland is making significant strides towards transforming the agricultural landscape of the country. As the ongoing projects near completion and new initiatives take shape, the future of irrigation farming in Ethiopia appears bright, promising sustainable agricultural development, enhanced food security, and improved livelihoods for farmers across the nation.

Besides, Ethiopian irrigation farming stands as a testament to human ingenuity and the transformative power of water. It has propelled Ethiopia's agricultural sector forward, ensuring food security, reducing poverty, and promoting sustainable development. With continued commitment to innovation, investment, and collaboration, Ethiopian irrigation farming will continue to play a pivotal role in Ethiopia's journey towards a prosperous and sustainable future.

Art & Culture

Harbinger to cultural turnaround

(Addis is kissing goodbye an entrenched lack of ownership and embracing conviction evolving as a culture)

BY NAOL GIRMA

New city development projects, which are implemented in Addis Ababa, are rapidly changing the images of it from squalid, disordered, less inviting and confused structure to attractive, bright coloured and moderate standards. Many agree that the on-going corridor development project in particular has clearly displayed the birth of new cultures and the extinction of old and draggy traditions.

The visionary idea of making Addis Ababa a flower, as its name depicts, inspired by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed is seeing a day of light in the heart of the City. This is being pulled off by the unflinching commitment of task forces comprised of officials of the City Administration.

Making the city suitable for living, connecting several developments to one another, and seeing to it that Addis Ababa meets a modern city standard were some of the major objectives development projects' entailed.

The construction of best designed asphalt roads, bicycle lines, improved sewerage systems and road side greeneries are among the several activities of the on-going corridor development project.

City Mayor Adanech Abiebie coordinates part of the corridor development from Piasa to Arat Kilo. The Mayor, who has been closely following the progress of this section of the project, recently explained the development for officials of the City Administration. According to her, the corridor development is progressing with a speedy pace, widening asphalt and pedestrian roads, accommodating bicycle lines, underground parking lots and other social service facilities. She also noted that her administration had planned to build forty eight kilo meters (KMs) of asphalt roads for vehicles, ninety six KMs of pedestrian roads, and over one hundred KMs of bicycle lines and the construction of more than half of it was complete within three months.

Part of the city, which is known as Arada, is a place where several historical sites are located. In this case, the corridor and city development projects are expected to make all the historical sites visible and attractive for tourists. "Arada is the hub of the City's historical sites comprising most of the first modern experiences of it. The first theatre hall "Cinema Ethiopia", the first post office, the first hotel, the statue of Abune Petros, etc. are located in this part of the City" said the mayor. Therefore, the development projects which are on their final phases, will connect all of these historical sites with modern city facilities to allow tourist have clear image of who we were in the past and enable the City residents to experience a



City Mayor Adanech Abiebie



Tiratu Beyene, Deputy Mayor



modern city life style", said Adanech.

In the speedy process of the corridor development project, it was learned that a new working culture was born and some outmoded traditions were being let bygones. Past experiences have indicated some long-lived habits of launching and extending the implementation or construction of projects almost in all sectors. Delaying the construction of buildings, roads, energy projects, and factories was an entrenched bad habit of contractors and other stakeholders. This habit also exposed the Country for deep rooted corruption, compelled its economic growth face inflation, and worsened the poor working culture. Thus, it obligated that the Nation to get rid of this backward tradition begging for an exemplary step to be taken. As a result, the implementation of the new city and corridor development projects in Addis Ababa is afoot. It is being undertaken day and night showcasing there is nothing impossible if one is truly committed. There had never been a trend of project execution with such a pace, quality, complexity and the area covered by the current city and corridor development projects in such a very short period of time, according to the Mayor.

Other officials of the City Administration and residents also share the birth of a new working culture based on what they witnessed from the progress of the corridor development project. The corridor development project has also created thousands of jobs for the youths and women of the City. In this case, the City seem to have kissed goodbye to an

old habit called lack of sense of ownership and warmly welcomed a strong sense of ownership, which will be expected to grow as a culture. One can observe the strong sense of ownership not only on the part of the City Administration officials that portray unflinching commitment but also on the part of the professionals to the labour forces in every level of the development.

On the other hand, the project, being multifaceted, has created a new approach on the way people view beauty and the standards of a city life style. According to the Mayor, during the demolition of parts of the City, where the corridor development project would be implemented, there had been a lot of garbage to get rid of. This indicated that the sense of beauty and city life standards had never been given much attention in the past and people got used to the low standard life styles.

Even though there were hard critics and waves of roomers created confusions on the society at the beginning, particularly when old residents were demolished, the quick corridor construction and renewal of buildings around Arat Kilo seem to fascinate residents. One can observe the transformation on sense of beauty and change from the increasing number of residents who comes out for walk and bike rides every night in the past few days.

It is also an indication that such projects do not only bring beauty and neatness but also advance people's lives in many ways. "These initiatives are not just about construction; they are about transforming our city into a more liveable, vibrant, and sustainable environment. By enhancing the aesthetics, greenery, and infrastructure, we are not only addressing public health concerns but also generating employment opportunities for our residents. Together, these efforts will elevate Addis Ababa and truly establish it as a city that caters to the needs of all its inhabitants", said Tiratu Beyene, Deputy Mayor on his facebook social platform page.

Additional good news was also announced by the City Mayor, which affords hope to many people whose business establishments were affected by the development projects and were left with little or no hopes of getting back to business. Adanech said, "We have no plan to displace people from their establishments but to improve the infrastructure with modern standards and enable them run their business in a civilized manner. Old buildings like the Ethiopian Electric Utilities will be renewed and turned into modern shopping moles. This way business men and women will be able gain their establishments back".

Some optimistic residents of the city also hope, as the city and corridor development projects continue with the current pace, the realization of making Addis Ababa a flower true to its name will not be long and new cultures will continue to be born.

Making the city suitable for living, connecting several developments to one another, and seeing to it that Addis Ababa meets a modern city standard were some of the major objectives development projects' entailed

Society

Creating better future for visually impaired persons

BY TEWODROS KASSA

In Ethiopia, like many countries around the world, visually impaired individuals face numerous challenges in their day to day activities. From navigating public spaces to accessing educational resources, there are many barriers that can limit the potential of these segments of the society to actively and fully participate in the development of the country and contribute meaningfully.

Visually impaired individuals in Ethiopia often encounter a lack of accessibility in public spaces, such as sidewalks, buildings, and transportation aside from facing social stigma and discrimination, which can hinder their integration into society. Misconceptions and prejudices also expose them to limited opportunities and exclusion from various aspects of life.

Without proper accommodations, navigating these spaces can be more challenging and even dangerous for individuals with visual impairments. Additionally, many visually impaired individuals face barriers to accessing education and employment opportunities, further limiting their ability to fully participate in society.

As many people agreed, addressing key areas such as access to education and employment, enhancing infrastructure and public spaces, advocating for inclusive policies, promoting social inclusion, leveraging technology for empowerment, and building support networks are important steps to create a better future not only for visually impaired persons but also for those people with different types of disabilities.

More importantly, understanding the challenges faced by visually impaired persons should be given due attention towards motivating them to actively participate in the community.

Thus, pertinent stakeholders should work proactively to easing the barriers to education for visually impaired individuals for the reason that in most cases more than a few visually impaired individuals encounter barriers to accessing quality education in Ethiopia. Without adequate resources and support, they struggle to receive proper education which in turn limits their potential for personal and professional growth.

Recently, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed has inaugurated 'Sheikha Fatima Bint Mubark Blind Boarding School' built in Addis Ababa by the Office of the First Lady for visually impaired persons. The Boarding School was built with the support obtained from Sheikha Fatima, the mother of Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed, the President of the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

The school, which will receive students of grade 9 to 12, encompasses vital services that are convenient for visually impaired students including classrooms, cafeteria, library and other state of the art facilities.

Inaugurating the school, Prime Minister Abiy said that the Office of The First Lady has previously built 34 schools across the



Partial view of 'Sheikha Fatima Bint Mubark Blind Boarding School'



country that are mainly rendering services to people with low income.

"On the occasion of the inauguration of the Sheikha Fatima Bint Mubarak School for the Blind, I would like to extend my congratulations to First Lady Zinash Tayachew for the fruition of a citizen-centered establishments putting the vulnerable at heart, as well as the success of the schools built throughout the nation through the Office of the First Lady," the Premier stated.

Learning from the success of this school for the blind, Abiy stressed the need to make sure that the city infrastructure, built in the country to give due attention to the needs of those with disabilities.

The newly inaugurated state of the art and very unique boarding school will receive more than 300 blind students from across the country, the Premier said.

Noting that the government's development projects focus on citizens with low income, Abiy affirmed that development projects, being carried out in Ethiopia aimed at benefiting citizens with low income, will

continue to intensify.

He also extended gratitude to Sheikha Fatima Bint Mubarak for the support extended to this noble cause.

First Lady Zinash Tayachew for her part said that the development projects being undertaken by the Office of the First Lady aim at easing the burden of the low income segment of the society.

She extended gratitude to all that contributed to the successful implementation of the project, including Sheikha Ftima.

Representing Sheikha Fatima, Humanity Department Chancellor of Mohamed Bin Zayed University for Humanities Khalifa Mubarek said that UAE and Ethiopia are enjoying strong bilateral relations and the newly inaugurated boarding school is the manifestation of this cordial partnership.

The bilateral relations of the two countries have been strengthening particularly following the official visit made by President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed in 2018 to Ethiopia.

What is more, creating an inclusive

environment for visually impaired individuals in Ethiopia involves more than just physical accommodations. It is about fostering a sense of belonging and active participation in society. By building supportive communities and networks, we can ensure that visually impaired individuals have the resources and connections they need to thrive.

Raising awareness about the challenges faced by visually impaired persons is also essential for fostering empathy and understanding within the community. Through education and advocacy efforts, we can break down barriers that prevent visually impaired individuals from fully participating in society and promote inclusivity.

During this digital era, technology has also the power to transform the lives of visually impaired individuals by providing them with tools and resources to enhance their independence and quality of life. By embracing assistive technology and arranging training programs for digital literacy, we can empower visually impaired persons to navigate the modern world with confidence.

Therefore, addressing policy gaps and advocating for inclusive practices are crucial steps in creating a more inclusive environment for visually impaired individuals. Through collaborative efforts and advocacy initiatives, positive changes can be made to ensure their rights and needs are met.

To this end, creating an inclusive environment for visually impaired persons requires a collective effort from individuals, businesses, and policymakers. For that reason, promoting accessibility, raising awareness, providing support services, collaborating on advocacy efforts, and empowering individuals, immensely contributes towards creating a more inclusive society where everyone has the opportunity to thrive. Thus, let's come together to make Ethiopia a more inclusive and accessible place for all its citizens.

Law & Politics

Representing every voices in National Dialogue

BY FIKADU BELAY

As many countries, Ethiopia has experienced periods of social, political and ethnic tensions that have threatened its social fabric. One of the reasons that get the country in to turmoil is extremism along different lines. Political polarizations, party system and ethnic tensions have rocked the country triggering grave ramifications and creating rifts among the peoples of the country. The narrative towards some major national issues remains divided straining the national unity and state building.

Albeit diversity has long been a source of national pride, it has also been used as a factor to stoke violence among the country's different ethnic groups and regions. The country also failed to reach at common consensus on many political, historical and social issues. There were also little attempts to hold national initiatives to create middle grounds between polarized issues. Hard won transition times were squandered. Peaceful transitions ended were turned in to bloody clashes making the road towards lasting peace and democracy bumpy.

In 2018, the country entered a new era following the popular uprising which saw a change of leadership and sparked national reform. However, old and new predicaments continue to pose threats to national stability.

For this reason, the National Dialogue Commission was envisioned as a bridge to help resolve these deep-seated tensions and work towards a more inclusive, cohesive political system. It is yet to convert its mandate into tangible progress on the ground. Overcoming Ethiopia's entrenched ethnic divisions and building a shared national identity remain significant challenges that the Commission is expected to fully address.

The commission strives to ensure that marginalized groups, women, youth, competitive parties, and other underrepresented voices are given equal opportunities to participate and contribute to the national discourse. By embracing the principles of equity and inclusiveness, the ENDC aims to foster a sense of ownership and collective responsibility among all Ethiopians in shaping the nation's future.

To make sure the big work is inclusive recently, the commission announced that warring parties will participate in the national consensus. However, the question is that how would these parties participate in the national consensus process. Involving warring parties in the national dialogue commission is a complex and delicate challenge, but it is one of the crucial for achieving a comprehensive and sustainable resolution to the country's current situation. These groups, which may include rebellions, must be brought to the table despite the difficulties at present.



One potential approach would be to offer assurances that could prove warring parties to participate in good faith. This could include guarantees of personal security. However, care must be taken to avoid the perception of rewarding violence or granting undue concessions.

Parallel to this, robust mechanisms for verification and accountability would need to be put in place. Additionally, the commission should strive to address the root causes of the conflicts, such as longstanding grievances, inequitable resource distribution, or systemic marginalization. By tackling these underlying issues head-on, the hope is that warring factions will see the value in laying down their arms and engaging constructively.

Regarding this the country may take the experience of other nations, like the South African National Peace Accord in the early 1990s, which brought together the apartheid government, the African National Congress, and other armed anti-apartheid groups to negotiate the transition to democracy. Despite initial distrust, the forum allowed for open dialogue and ultimately paved the way for the peaceful end of white minority rule.

Also, the Arusha Accords in Burundi in the 2000s included the government, political parties, and several armed rebel factions in a process to end the country's civil war. While the implementation faced setbacks, the accords did establish power-sharing arrangements and a framework for disarmament. Moreover, in Colombia, similar to South Africa and Burundi, peace negotiations between the government and the FARC guerrilla group began in 2010.

These examples demonstrate that with sufficient political will, security guarantees, and carefully structured processes, it is possible and must to include warring parties in national dialogues. The keys seem to be ensuring equal representation, building trust through confidence-building

measures, and addressing the root causes of the conflict. In Ethiopia, this would require a tailored approach.

Moreover, the ENDC recognizes the importance of collaboration and partnerships in achieving its objectives. It actively seeks to engage with international organizations, regional bodies, and other stakeholders to leverage their expertise, resources, and experiences. So, foreign international organization bodies should support the commission activity and promote peace in the country. By forging strong alliances, the commission aims to benefit from global best practices and learn from successful models of dialogue and conflict resolution from around the world.

Moving forward, the commission will likely need to adopt a more proactive, assertive approach. This could involve leveraging its platform to raise public awareness, building stronger partnerships with civil society groups, and exerting greater pressure on political elites to compromise and enact meaningful changes.

ENDC should serve as an independent, impartial, and inclusive body that brings together diverse voices from various segments of Ethiopian society. Its primary objective is to facilitate open and constructive discussions, promoting understanding, trust, and consensus-building among different stakeholders. By providing a neutral platform for dialogue, the commission aims to address the root causes of conflicts, promote social cohesion, and foster a sense of national unity.

Ultimately, the success of the National Dialogue Commission will depend on its capacity to facilitate genuine dialogue, build consensus, and translate its recommendations into tangible reforms. The path ahead is not easy, but the potential rewards for Ethiopia-greater stability, prosperity, and national unity -

make the effort essential.

On this week, ENDC Commissioner Muhamod Dirir opened the discussion by noting the increasing media coverage of the dialogue process and highlighting that the media shares a similar mission with the Commission in the case of peacemaking and nation-building. The National Dialogue Media Council is actively supporting the ENDC by guiding media institutions to inform the public about the dialogue's progress.

Armed conflicts continue to cause significant harm to people's lives and property damage. Dialogue is the only mechanism through which both society and the government can constructively resolve problems peacefully. Therefore, the ENDC has established branches in ten states and identified more than a thousand participants. All these developments need media support to keep the public informed.

The House of People Representatives Democracy Affairs Standing Committee Chairperson, Ewunetu Alene, also described the media's involvement in the national dialogue. The media must shape narratives that do not exacerbate Ethiopia's peace and stability. National dialogue is not optional; it is imperative given the current crisis, and the media has a responsibility to inform the public about the process.

The National Dialogue Media Council Chairperson, Getnet Tadesse, on his part stated that the council will contribute more in the coming months. Getnet urged council members and all media practitioners to produce constructive reports that will enhance the effectiveness of the dialogue.

Ultimately, the inclusion of warring parties, though fraught with challenges, is a necessary step toward achieving lasting peace and national reconciliation in Ethiopia. With the right approach and safeguards in place, this difficult but crucial objective can be realized.



Ephrem Endale
Contributor

Between you & me

What's in a Name!

Sometimes back a group of us were idling away time over tea when we heard three guys on a nearby table locked in a passionate debate. (Well, the way they structured their ideas and the passion behind their give and take could be nothing like small talk or conversation but a full blown debate!) The gents must have been anywhere close to their prime and you know what they were debating about? Names! "Debating about names of all issues in the country and elsewhere?" Yes, indeed.

Well their being sort of veterans them talking about names might not be a front page headline. But since they enjoy talking about names, who is anyone to tell them otherwise? By the way these days, maybe because almost every other think the seat at the head of the table is ours and ours only we try to set agendas for others. "What's wrong with them talking about sports when there are numerous political, social and economic issues to talk about?" Hey anyone who thinks sports isn't also about those three is missing a lot. Especially the trend seems to be that globally biased and divisive politics is tainting sports. When the world thought the era of the Olympic boycotts is over for good; look when followed the Russia-Ukraine war. Tens of thousands of Russian sportsmen and women are kicked out of almost all international events for no crime of their own but because of sheer politics. So it wouldn't be fair to say sport isn't about politics. Look at the money footballers and other sportsmen and women

make. Hundreds of thousands of dollars, euros, pounds a week! Even in our own country there were times we heard of footballers making two hundred plus grand a month!) Look at the profit/loss books of teams. So it wouldn't be fair to say sport isn't about economics. Look at the forced social alienation the Russian sportsmen and women suffer as their chances of meeting and engaging with other sports personalities and the larger global community has been closed and bolted tight. So it wouldn't be fair to say sport isn't about social issues.

Anyways I'm not sure how I went into all that. Yes, we were talking about many of trying to set agendas on which others could converse and argue about while we, the e agenda-setters are nowhere near.

So these threesome were talking about names. Their debate wasn't about who came from where and anything like that. By the way given the things we see and hear we could be pardoned for thinking as such. Many are tired of those who attempt to tie each and every issue with who came from which part of the country. They raise various names and each time, only God knows what measuring scales they were using, they put words like "Best;" "Good;" "Bad," and more. The thing here was that there were absolutely no supporting points each time they put a certain name up on the golden pedestal or shredded it beyond recognition. And it was without the crucial supporting argument being there that

they were 'rating.' Now earlier I said the 'who came from where' curse which immobilizes any legitimate and civilized discussion wasn't there. Well, though I still prefer to hold to that, I've to confess you can't miss the tint of ethnic bias and ignorance here and there. Hmmm... But the gents were very careful not to sound as such, and only those natural reflexes on which we've little or no control created the threat of derailing the passionate debate.

Years back there was this trend of Europeanizing Ethiopian names especially, it's safe to say, among the females. I mean things were so out of control suddenly you started hearing more Suzy, Betty, than! Aha! If you think I'm going to mention Ethiopian names and put myself in the firing line well, I've to tell you that I might not be the smartest dude around, but I'm neither that dumb. Now names usually create some sort of strong emotions in us probably when we associate them with actual persons.

"So, what name did you give your son?"

"We named him..."

"What! Are you people crazy! That's the name of that notorious torturer who brought so much pain and suffering to our village. And you give your innocent son that name!" Believe me such things happen. There's the trend that forces us to relate names with actual persons living or otherwise. Parents gave their children names of the singers and entertainment personalities

they liked, historical figures they admired and famous fictional figures. I have yet to hear parents naming their son 'Shylock;' Ha! It isn't fair at all! While the Stalins and Ho Chi Minhs thrive that the Shylocks and Iago's are ignored isn't fair at all! (Whatever I'm trying to say I'm trying to find out!) Look no denying names various create emotions; but I don't think tying names to past or present personalities who aren't known for good behaviors is a little off track. In that case, believe me and nine out of ten names would probably fail. Somewhere, sometime there might have been some notorious person bearing your name. So what!

Having said all that there is one fact we can't just throw under the bed. These days names are so crucial they could make or break your day. Many of us deliberately or missing the most important cells in our user names for all wicked purposes; to hurt people for whatever reason. It's no secret there are a lot of instances where your name might open doors widely for you, or slam them in your face! It could be that bad that up. On the flip side of the coin you might get benefits which you don't deserve just because of your name. Such things, believe me happen on almost all levels and in most places. We can only hope reason and rationality would soon win the day and names would just remain names.

Never found out how the debate of those seniors wound up.

Locked and Bolted gates!

No more a resident of Arada! That's me. Having relocated to the outskirts of the city, I just hope that the 'Arada Phenomenon' - if there had ever been anything like that - has left me thought I've physically left Arada. A couple of friends joked maybe they should take turns to remind what life in Arada meant as it is as easy as a blink or two to lose such memories these days. But also there is the task of learning the ways of your new surroundings. I can tell you that one thing that spoils the whole show is that we've preconceived notions of places as I tried to mention in earlier pieces. Quite a number of us including me had an already set-in-stone ideas about the place I reside in now. It's astounding how wrong one can be in such matters. The picture archived in our minds and the actual picture are so far apart you wonder where from the world all the misconceptions came. A few friends dropped by and they were as taken aback as I was.

The problem here is wrong misconceptions keep you from navigating places you should have seen for yourselves.

"How about looking for a house in....?"

"Are you kidding me? Do you think I'm a fool to pack my bags and go that hellish place! It'll never happen."

"But you've never seen it? How can you be so sure it wouldn't be convenient for you?"

"I've enough information from friends and others and I don't have to see it for myself."

Yes most of us never see those places, not even for a few seconds, and yet we think we're entitled to write volumes about them.

It is the same with people we don't personally know but talk about like experts based on what we've heard from others. "So how did you find the place?" some ask me.

"Well, until now I've found it a fairly comfortable place. Nothing much to be irritated about though there are other aspects I still have to know about. I tell you such positive answers at first bring about the nasty smirks and those internal rumblings of "Does this dude think we're a bunch of fools!" Though such reactions aren't nice it is only fair to look at what drove them to act as such. Of course, preconceived pictures and narratives! Those are forcing them to keep the gates locked and bolted and refuse to open them even with the slightest of cracks. I'm saying most of us, if not all, have already been biased to the point of reacting with hostility than having rational, intelligent discussions.

"Are you telling me you actually live in that place?"

"Yes, I am. What's wrong with it?"

"What's wrong is you yourself! What's got into you?"

Then they go into narratives dissecting the place you live in into the tiniest of pieces! Almost all the sentences with things like "They say..." "I've heard that place has..." "A friend of mine told me..." and the like. "In fact I can tell you I should have moved sooner!"

The stories you are told would have left Hollywood rushing to recruit the minds behind such creativity. They even tell you about the stories which happened "... a few days ago."

What! You have been there all the time and haven't heard these stories! You're not going to take that sitting down and outright reject what you've been told.

"Nothing of that sort happened not only a few days ago even years ago."

"How do you know that?"

"What kind of a stupid question is that? Have you forgotten I'm a resident of the place you dummy?"

While we are at it, there are a lot of misconceptions about people we don't personally know and yet are told all kinds of horrors stories; horror stories which, very unfortunately, we believe more time than not. It's sad to hear people's names being trampled upon like useless waste based on purely unsubstantiated and most of the time deliberately twisted, 'biographical narratives.' No wonder places, too, are painted with the wrong colors that don't fit what they are made of and what they actually represent.

One trend that takes most of us in the wrong directions seem to be that few of us, if any, ask important questions which would have done away with all the fictional chapters we're fed. Of course we might ask "How do you know that?" and the answers would be like "Friends told me..." "I heard it from reliable sources..." or to give things more emphasis they'd say something like, "Why, everyone is talking about that. Don't tell me you haven't yet heard!" Ok, here should be where the real questions begin;

"How can you believe everything others tell you?"

"Because they know; that's why. Should I suspect everyone of telling me lies?"

"No, I'm not saying that, But, at least you can make some minor investigations..."

"Like what?"

"Like talking to people who actually live in those places"

"Why should I go through all that trouble while there are people who know everything tell me the real story?"

"But wouldn't it have been better if you heard it from the horse's mouth itself?"

"To tell you I wouldn't believe those who actually live there. They wouldn't tell you the real story."

"But why? Why do you think they wouldn't tell you the real story?"

"Well they want people to think they are living the best life while they actually are suffering."

That's what I was trying to say mentioning about locked and bolted gates! The danger of preconceived notions and pictures could be devastating! These days most of us have wrong ideas and notions built on wrong bricks and have solidified to the point of not giving way whatever the push might be. I'm not talking here about the social media and such things which are somewhat difficult to control lest we fully part them. I'm talking about day daily people-to-people social interactions. That's where the gushing contaminated and damaging rivers of wrong narratives gush while the streams of true and reliable stories trickle only few, if any, notice them.

Corridor Development transforming Addis Ababa into modern, livable city



BY DARGIE KAHSAI

Since the last two months, Addis Ababa City is undergoing an extensive corridor development projects mainly in the major streets of the city. The corridor development, which is underconstruction day and night, is going well based on the schedule of the city, according to City administration.

The corridor development project is part of the reform measures that aims to make Addis Ababa a suitable, beautiful and livable, modern and smart city. The project eyes constructing bycle routs, spacious pedestrian walkways, parks, modern rest rooms, better roads and underground walkways in critical areas in roundabouts.

The corridor development project aims to improve the outdated drianage systmes, to improve the quality of life in the metropolis and to upgrade utility services like power and internet.

According to Addis Ababa City Mayor, Adanech Abibie, the Corridor Development Project includes over 48 kilometers of asphalt road development, four underground walkway, 96 kilometers walkways, and 100 kilometers bycle routs. In addition, five kilometers running track and 48 new bus and taxi terminals that can facilitate the transport activities of the city.



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AASTU's 8th research conference

BY DIRRIBA TESHOME

Addis Ababa Science and Technology University's (AASTU's) 8th annual international research conference was held successfully on May 16 and 17.

The Guest of Honor, State Minister of Innovation and Technology, Dr. Bayyisa Bedada, opened the conference officially and disclosed researchers from various universities, industry practitioners, and researchers from various research centers would present their impactful research findings.

On the first half-day, six substantial speakers from various fields of academia presented their research expertise, research findings, entrepreneurial skills, and recommendations on how to update and increase existing research knowledge for future application.

The first keynote speaker, Professor Dereje Ayalew from Addis Ababa University discussed Ethiopian Geology and untapped mineral resources. "Ethiopia possesses numerous untapped mineral resources. Young researchers and students in undergraduate and graduate programs have to open their eyes and produce empirical evidence of how important the area is to the country's economy."

Chinese scholars Yao Weihua and He Xiaojun



were the second speakers who discussed CIAE's experience in research reactors to help Africa with the peaceful use of atomic energy. They discussed China's experience with atomic energy utilization and output.

The other speaker was Dr. Wubshet Shimellis from AAU emphasized the importance of artificial intelligence in construction management. "Artificial intelligence is a key instrument in today's companionship. It is important to handle the problems that AI presents in order to reap the benefits of its positive impact on our daily lives."

Likewise, the founder of Trideal House in Belgium, who is also working on a prototype for the Trideal House Project in AASTU, Dr. Michel delivered a speech on achieving sustainable development goals in the industry, including initiatives and insights for Ethiopia. "One of the United Nations' long-term objectives is to meet the basic needs of people."



As well, Professor Tsegaye Nega, Anega Energies founder, made an informative presentation sharing his personal and professional experiences in the United States and Ethiopia.

Similarly, Russian scholar Dr. Masamba Kah made a keynote speech focusing on industrial-educational partnerships and the Pan African natural resources to human capital transit concept.

He emphasized the importance of nuclear education, how Russia became a nuclear powerhouse, the potential for nuclear education in Russia, and Russia's practical training experience in nuclear.

Following the keynotes, studies and posters were put forth in the afternoon in five syndicates in AASTU's compound.

At the STII 2024 research conference, from the 140 papers and posters submitted, 85 research papers were chosen and presented in five sessions over the

two days.

The 85 significant studies with implications for industry development and solutions to problems were presented. And AASTU invited all researchers with potentially significant breakthroughs to share their findings at the 2024 annual research conference.

In addition to Ethiopian researchers, professionals with substantial international experience from Russia, China, South Korea, Belgium, and South Africa offered views and presented their study findings.

The papers presented on the conference were directly aligned with the research thematic areas of the university's eight centers of excellence. Furthermore, it is mentioned that the studies' findings are highly valuable for the development of the industrial sector and can be applied to alleviate societal problems.

Finally, Dr. Abraham Debebe, AASTU Vice President for Research and Technology Transfer, presided over the closing program of the STII 2024 research conference and awarded certificates to the participants, including keynote speakers, research and poster presenters. "The conference was an excellent opportunity for knowledge creation, experience sharing, and networking. I also would urge participants to utilize the experience and knowledge gained during the conference for the benefit of the country."

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