



# The Ethiopian Herald

Vol. LXXX No 237 13 JUNE 2024 - Sene 6, 2016

Thursday

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## Saudi investors keen on forming joint ventures with local businesses

BY YESUF ENDRIS

**ADDIS ABABA-** Some Saudi Arabian investors expressed a desire to interact with key players from Ethiopia's private sector to form joint ventures and to boost their presence in the latter's investment opportunities.

It is to be recalled that a high-level Saudi business delegation came to Addis Ababa last week to explore Ethiopia's business prospects and seek ways to set up joint ventures with domestic companies.

Approached by the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA), Al-Majal Agriculture and Industry

Company CEO Khalid al-Hajri stated that his company, which is engaged in the agricultural sector and producing fertilizer, is desirous of setting up joint ventures with local firms.

Khalid expressed optimism about Ethiopia's huge potential for agricultural investment.

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## Russian Pan-African center pledges 250 mln USD to Ethiopia

BY YESUF ENDRIS

**ADDIS ABABA-** Having inked quadripartite Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Ministries of Women and Social Affairs, Health and Bonga University, Russian Pan-African

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Gedion Timotheos

## Preparations in full swing to establish institutions for TJ implementation

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## Cultural food displays pave the way for promotion, commerciality

BY MESERET BEHAILU

**ADDIS ABABA** –Participants who are displaying their cultural foods in the 11th Tourism and Hospitality Week expressed conviction about the events' great significance to promote Ethiopia's culinary culture and expedite commerciality.

Various food items from different parts of the country are presented in the food preparation and symposium festival in a bid to provide such items in Addis Ababa's star-designated hotels.

Approached by *The Ethiopian Herald*, Alemitu Azemraw from Gamo Zone of the South West Ethiopia State noted that they brought the community's cultural foods to the symposium as it



is health-oriented food that preserves its traditional value. "Showcasing such food identity would bring a paramount significance to encourage social linkage, economic growth, and job creation."

Depending on the type of food, there is something for weddings, holidays, to welcome guests and for newborns to

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National engagement in climate diplomacy

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Irrigation development - Somali region's new work culture

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African music explosion biggest cultural industry in Africa?

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## New framework launched to eliminate VL in eastern Africa

BY STAFF REPORTER

**ADDIS ABABA** — A new, comprehensive framework has been launched to guide health authorities, policy makers and other stakeholders towards elimination of visceral leishmaniasis (VL) as a public health problem in eastern Africa.

Also known as kala-azar, VL is a deadly parasitic disease that causes fever, weight loss, spleen and liver enlargement, and – if untreated – death.

The framework developed by the World Health Organization (WHO) in collaboration with various partners, including the non-profit drug research and development organization Drugs for Neglected Diseases initiative (DNDi) and Ministries of Health across the region, was launched at a meeting co-hosted by WHO, DNDi, and the Ministry of Health.

‘The VL elimination framework will offer important direction to countries in the region and provide momentum to reach the finish line of elimination,’ said Dr Dereje Duguma, State Minister of Health.

‘The Ethiopian government remains committed to work with partners to develop programs at all levels and expand access to healthcare and achieve the targets of elimination by 2030.’

The launch of the Eastern Africa framework comes at a time when countries in Asia are already demonstrating success in eliminating VL as a public health problem.

The new framework for Eastern Africa presents a similar opportunity for the nine endemic countries, offering a comprehensive approach for countries to implement strategies, assess progress, identify gaps, and build capacity.

‘VL is a severe disease primarily affecting vulnerable groups, such as children and the poorest populations. I am very pleased that the framework’s core pillars prioritize innovation for these neglected populations. Since its establishment in 2003, DNDi has focused on developing new, safer, more efficacious, and patient-friendly treatments.’

‘This, combined with complementary strategies such as vector control, undoubtedly will play a pivotal role in the journey towards elimination,’ said Professor Samuel Kariuki, the Eastern Africa Director for DNDi.

The meeting was attended by officials from the ministries of health of nine high VL burden countries in Africa, namely Chad, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, and Uganda, as well as representatives from the African Union, researchers, academia, the private sector, and funding institutions.

## Blood, Tissue Bank pleads for donation

• Collects 312,176 blood units in 11 months

BY YESUF ENDRIS

**ADDIS ABABA**- The low number of blood donors leaves many patients in hospitals in critical situations, the Blood and Tissue Bank of Ethiopia said, calling for the public’s response to the cause.

The Bank made the appeal ahead of the preparation to celebrate the 20th year of World Blood Donation Day. In connection with the World Blood Donation Day, which is being marked on June 14, the Bank is carrying out extensive awareness- raising campaigns in several corners of the country.

Speaking at the occasion yesterday, the Bank’s Director General Ashenafi Azezew (MD) highlighted that the low number of blood donors put the lives of many patients who are in dire need of life-saving blood and tissue transfusions at serious risk.

‘The importance of blood and eye tissue donations is critically needed and we would like to thank voluntary blood donors for their life-saving gifts. This year’s celebration highlights giving thankful messages. The theme is also coined as ‘Celebration 20 years of giving, thank you, donors,’ the director-general emphasized.



Ashenafi Azezew (MD)

The Blood and Tissue Bank of Ethiopia’s Goodwill Ambassador Artist Yigerem Dejene also pledged to donate his eye tissue upon his death. ‘Today is my birthday... [] it is my honor to pledge my eye tissue [to be donated after his life] on this day. My message on this day is also to urge people to voluntarily follow suit. Many people need our donation which costs nothing, but voluntarism.’

According to Yigerem, each donation can save lives and improve the health and well-being of patients in hospitals. All healthy donors should not hesitate to contribute to this vital cause, he



Artist Yigerem Dejene

pleaded.

In a related development, the Bank has collected 312,176 blood units during the past 11 months of this fiscal year. Having achieved about 84 percent of the plan, the Bank’s performance in this regard is much lower than the international standard of the World Health Organization that underlines one percent population to donate blood voluntarily.

It was learned that the celebration of this year’s World Blood Donation Day will begin on June 14 in Jimma and conclude in late June in Addis Ababa.



## Experts’ involvement in agricultural dev’t indispensable

• Nation launches agri’l professional societies’ alliance

BY YOHANES JEMANEH

**ADDIS ABABA** – Agricultural professionals have called on the government to expedite sector’s development through incorporating their views in policy measures.

During the launching workshop of the Ethiopian Agricultural Professional Societies Alliance that held yesterday, the experts have suggested the government to easily access professionals’ opinions while taking policy measures to modernize the agriculture sector.

The former Ethiopian Agricultural Professionals Association Secretary Habtu Assefa (PhD), said that the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ethiopian Institute of Agricultural Research have been urging professionals to contribute fair share for agricultural development by establishing an inclusive and formal associations’ coalition.

Accordingly, he said, the Ethiopian Agricultural Professional Societies Alliance is now established passing through various processes.

The formation of such alliance helps the country to have a united and strong think tank that contribute for the development of the agriculture sector through contributing professional recommendations in policy measures, he indicated.

Experiences have been drawn from various agricultural professional associations’ alliances operating in the US, which are successful in influencing country’s policy, he expressed.

Therefore, Ethiopia has now a coalition of professionals societies engaged in the agriculture sector which is easily accessible by government bodies for any agricultural study, professional opinion or policy impact assessment among others, Habtu said.

He noted that Ethiopia has agricultural research institution, universities and extension programs that strive for agricultural advancement and the newly launched alliance would help even to study these institutions’ contribution to the sector’s growth.

Once registered by the intended government organization, the alliance would begin its task of providing professional support to the government and other bodies working for the development of the agriculture sector, he added.

Ethiopian Agricultural Professional Societies Alliance President Prof. Daniel Temesgen on his part said that the alliance has committed members so that it is vital to employ their knowledge to advance country’s agriculture.

Similarly, the coalition would also help its members to get support to provide significant studies and other contributions in the agriculture sector, he indicated.



# House praises NDRMC's risk management endeavors

BY ASHENAFI ANIMUT

**ADDIS ABABA-** The Ethiopian National Risk Disaster Management Commission (NDRMC) is making promising steps to enhance the country's risk management capacity and withstand potential risks, the House said.

Members of the House of People's Representatives Foreign Relations and Peace Affairs Standing Committee paid a visit to the NDRMC Headquarters yesterday.

Speaking at the occasion, the Committee Chairperson DimaNegewo (PhD) praised the commission's capacity building activities in terms of policy formulation, technological advancement, and institutional structures that would enable it to withstand possible natural and manmade shocks.

Dima (PhD) further highlighted that the commission is building a promising

foundation which is believed to manage the possible risks in line with its prior mission.

"It is crucial to streamline the emergency response interventions to outreach end beneficiaries by building the capacities of pertinent actors at all levels. Building trust, accountability, and awareness raising, and tailoring technologies to address swift emergency responses are also worth equal consideration."

Aside from policy shift, the chairperson reiterated that resource mobilization, human capital development, ICT, inclusivity and other parameters are impetus to bring paradigm shift towards tackling expectations and underemployment.

In addition to building regional capacities, it is highly important to prioritize humanity and run merit-based leadership to deliver accessible and equitable responses which help ensure Ethiopia's socio economic prosperity, the chairperson emphasized.

For his part, the NDRMC Commissioner ShiferawTeklemariam (PhD) stated that the commission is exerting utmost efforts by spearheading initiatives to harness technologies for early warning systems to help minimize risks, expedite interventions and rehabilitation activities.

"Humanitarian aid should be generated from our own capacity by harnessing technologies, institutional capacities and strictures. Also, we are currently undertaking warehouse extension projects in FinoteSelam, Hosaena and KebriDehar to facilitate the response, and this expansion project will exceed the response from 23% to 47%."

The commissioner also stressed the need to manage the number of aid seekers and prioritize humanity. In addition, stakeholders at all levels need to build cooperation and promote institutional capacities to discharge responsibilities at all levels.

During the past nine months of the current

fiscal year, the commission has dispatched about 2.9 million quintals of food items worth about 30 billion Birr.

Shiferaw (PhD) is optimistic about the newly-formulated Disaster Risk Management Policy's ability to address frauds and other possible maladministration meaningfully. "Corrective measures are also taken to 500 people who have been caught red-handed in nepotism and bribery."

Humanitarian response requires stakeholders' consolidated efforts and streamlined institutional structures, he remarked.

It was learned that the MPs visited the commission's early warning, emergency response, data, and emergency coordination centers, ongoing and upcoming projects.

It is to be recalled that the House recently ratified the Disaster Risk Management Policy that is believed to minimize risks and build risk-resilient communities.

## Preparations in full swing to establish institutions for TJ implementation

BY STAFF REPORTER

**ADDIS ABABA -** The preparations of major legal, procedural and content documents underway to establish institutions critical for the implementation of Transitional Justice (TJ), Justice Minister disclosed.

This was noted during the 100-day of Council of Ministers performance evaluation meeting in the presence of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed yesterday.

During the meeting, Justice Minister Gedion Timotheos presented an evaluation report on the performance and state of affairs of legal and justice affairs. Speaking on the evaluation session, Gedion reported on the approval of the

Transitional Justice (TJ) Policy Document and related matters.

The TJ Policy document was approved following extensive studies and consultations conducted with stakeholders in an inclusive and participatory manner, the Minister elaborated.

The Minister added that a road map was prepared to implement the policy and legal, procedural and content development activities are being prepared to establish the institutions required to effectively implement the policy.

The Minister further said that the laws and procedures have been prepared and implemented to effectively conduct reforms in the justice system at national and regional

levels.

He also mentioned about the activities being carried out to implementing the proclamation on the procedures of justice administration system and to ratify and implement the criminal procedure code.

A model law has been prepared relating to the use of traditional courts and dispatched to regional states. The Ministry will further focus on improving the administration of society focused justice to ensure that citizens get better services at community level, he noted.

Proclamation on the management of legal administrative procedures and criminal justice procedures are several of the areas on which the ministry will focus in the future, he remarked.

## Cultural food...

share the joy with others. For instance, *Kossa* (local name) – in Amharic -Bulla, which is made from *Enset* product (false banana) mixed with butter is a sign of honor and food to be served when a guest arrives in one's home, she added.

According to Alemitu displaying different cultural foods in the symposium would pave the way for such dishes to access Addis Ababa's star-designated hotels and promote the community's culture at the international level whilst increasing tourist inflow in the respective

state.

Soryes Miftu from Hariari State said that they are presenting healthy and tasty food that truly represent the Hariari people's culinary culture and promote such values among the rest of Ethiopians and the global community at large. "For instance, *Helibte Merih* prepared from *Absh* (Fenugreek), tomato, meat, red pepper, and different spices are among the delicious foods which are original and help to enhance human health."

Soryes added, "The Harari people are well known for their hospitality and being charming and friendly for whoever comes to their places. We are truly hospitable and such humanity supported by delicious food will create an unforgettable memory for tourists."

She underlined that promoting such types of food, especially in easily accessible star-designated hotels, promotes each community's rich culture and builds Ethiopia's positive image at large.

## Saudi investors...

Ethiopia would be a getaway to penetrate other African countries' markets to Saudi companies and the formation of joint ventures with local companies is crucial in this regard.

According to him, the company can produce and export 150 million metric tons of fertilizer annually.

Mohammed Saeed Al-Qahtani, a senior business consultant in Saudi Arabia, also told EPA that the trade ties between Ethiopia and Saudi Arabia are unsatisfactory when compared with the two countries' geographic proximity and rich

potential. Saudi investors visited several sites in Ethiopia and found it very attractive to do business. "We will elevate the commercial ties in collaboration with Ethiopian partners."

Saudi investors that have been engaged in mining, tourism, manufacturing, and agriculture sectors capitalized on the visit to explore Ethiopia's market and held business-to-business meetings with their Ethiopian counterparts that would conclude with agreements and joint ventures. "Ethiopian companies also need the partnership with Saudi counterparts for capital ventures."

H pointed out that the increase in the number of flights between Ethiopian and Saudi cities is also expected to help investors to get more trading opportunities.

The number of Saudi companies which will come to invest in Ethiopia is not known but they would soon study ways to become involved in the country's market. "In oil and gas, for example, Saudi investors are experienced and capable; in turn, Ethiopia is the best destination for such business. So, we are foreseeing that they will come soon," Mohammed remarked.

## Russian Pan...

Public-Private Partnership Development Center pledged to donate 250 million USD.

During the signing of the MoU yesterday, Health State Minister, Dereje Duguma (MD0) said that the donation is aimed to build 2,000 fully equipped Paramedic Midwife Stations (PMS) in the upcoming five years across rural areas of Ethiopia.

During the first phase (in 2024), 50 PMS will be constructed and 150 by 2025. While the rest centers will be launched in late years of the project implementation.

The project will help to ensure health services particularly in women Pre-Conception Care (PCC), pregnancy management, obstetrics, including emergency care. Maternal and reproductive health care including Family planning, antenatal care, and delivery services, postnatal care, adolescent sexual and reproductive health are basic services to be delivered in centers.

The project is instrumental to play significant role in building system of training of national personnel in reproduction related health issues.

The Pan African Public-Private Partnership center will support and complement the overall national efforts improving access to essential health care to the rural community, according to the CEO of the Center.

Bonga University President Petros Woldegiorgis on his part added that Bonga University, as the key initiator of the project in cooperation with Pan- African Public-Private Partnership (PPP) Development Center, links its nursing home project with the Paramedic Midwife Stations-PMS in all areas.

It will also facilitate trainings for professionals. It will play expertise role in the field of PMS training, he said.



# Opinion

## National engagement in climate diplomacy

BY MENGESHA AMARE

It is highly thought that not only must countries fight the causes of climate change but they should also adapt to the consequences that are often most dramatic for the people residing in developing countries like Africa and its subset Ethiopia, to be specific, indeed! Our time is highly compromised by climate change, which is one of the most captious continental and global challenges. With a best hope to face the bad effects of climate change on world security and to drive the world on a low-carbon pathway, a multinational effort of the world leaders is on the process to hammer out a new global pact for reducing the emissions. Ethiopia's approach to environmental diplomacy in this regard is really an encouraging one.

Ethiopia has been working hard to intensify green economy and environmental diplomacy through drawing importance lessons from countries which have been recording remarkable achievements in that regard. Climate diplomacy calls for preparing appropriate risk assessment and risk management strategies at a global strategic level. Climate diplomacy also means prioritizing climate action with partners worldwide – in diplomatic dialogues, public diplomacy and external policy instruments.

It is well recognized that Ethiopia has implemented an exemplary tree-planting campaign by planting over 20 billion seedlings over the past years. Through the Green Legacy Diplomacy initiative, Ethiopia has had excellent results in building regional and cross-border peace, development, problem-solving, and strategic partnerships.

Recognizing the fact that effective climate diplomacy which must be firmly rooted within the national interest as per the national policies and drivers, the country has been highly focusing on intensifying climate and environmental diplomacy.

Interestingly, in Ethiopia, there is now considerable understanding about climate change diplomacy among higher decision makers, as well as at the mid-level experts' level.

The main reason for having mass mobilization against impacts of climate change has been to provide awareness to the nation in general and vulnerable communities in particular. These green initiatives are also a means to make the regional, continental and even the global community aware about the impact of climate change on communities in order to come up with a binding agreement to address it.

For instance, Ethiopia's first national climate change conference took place on January 15, 2009, and was attended by high level government officials, CSOs, UN, bilateral and multilateral organizations, as well as the private sector.

Needless to state, this great East African nation is a seat for the African Union and the location for a large number of diplomatic corps and consular representatives. National, regional and international conferences,

meetings and panel discussions are regularly being held in Addis Ababa. For instance, the first climate change conference, which was held in Addis Ababa in 2009, engaged most of the diplomats and contributed a lot towards the idea of creating the political wing of African negotiators.

Knowledge generation, sharing and networking that consist of research, knowledge management and peer learning, and outreach activities are significantly useful in bolstering capacity mobilization, capacity building and technical assistance, which have been well focused on as they help bring about change.

True, the country has to entertain a new kind of climate politics as national actions prove national and sub national actors ranging from provinces and cities, to civil sector organizations and private companies including major forerunners with viable approach towards success.

Yes, Ethiopia engages in several international forums and negotiations on a wide range of environmental issues, including climate change, biodiversity conservation, and sustainable development. For instance, the recently paid visit to Singapore, a city state, has helped the nation draw important lessons regarding green growth and environmental protection. Unequivocally, the changes in green economy diplomatic actions would yield higher benefits for Ethiopia as well as for other east African and the entire African nations.

Specifically, Ethiopia's stance on international environmental issues should be beneficial to its domestic politics and economics, while improving the local environment. Diplomacy is the continuation of internal affairs, and therefore foreign affairs should serve internal interests.

True, Ethiopia's environmental policies should not be determined by other nation's demands, and climate diplomacy refers to the use of diplomatic channels and strategies to address global climate change and its impact on international relations. It involves negotiating and implementing climate-related policies, treaties, and agreements at the international level, as well as cooperation between countries and other stakeholders to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, adapt to the impacts of climate change, and promote sustainable development.

Basically, climate diplomacy aims at committing to multilateral style in climate policy, addressing implications of climate change on peace and security, accelerating domestic action and raising global ambition and enhancing international climate cooperation through advocacy and outreach.

In recent years, there has been increasing interest in how to integrate climate change into foreign policy, known as 'climate diplomacy'. Climate diplomacy encompasses the actions of diplomats, negotiators and policy makers representing national climate change interests in international forums.

An emphasis on climate diplomacy could potentially be a significant vehicle for developing countries like Ethiopia to

influence international climate change negotiations. Intensifying climate diplomacy has, of course, uses, to increase understanding of how to integrate climate change into foreign policy, begin to build the knowledge and capacity of Ethiopia's negotiators and diplomats in climate diplomacy and how climate diplomacy can be fostered and enhanced at the national level, in the negotiations and through other forums and make further support decision-makers in designing and delivering climate compatible development through effective foreign policy design and implementation.

Since coordinating actions along these tracks is a necessary step, Ethiopia's climate diplomacy has entertained many parallel tracks that will therefore be a necessary to facilitate climate transition to achieve half of its electricity requirements from renewable energy.

These parallel climate diplomacy dimensions include multilateral adaptation by working within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, multilateral innovation by tailoring climate and geopolitical competition, trilateral bridging by positioning Ethiopia as a bilateral expansion by connecting climate to economic cooperation through new green partnerships.

Ethiopia has been advancing towards being one of the global active drivers of climate resilience via well intensifying green ecology and sustainable biodiversity preservation towards keeping the balance of nature. Through the climate resilience agenda, Ethiopia aims to forge a new climate identity, positioning itself as a hub for the co-development of green technologies. This strategy is intended to attract and deploy finance, thereby accelerating continental as well as global climate action.

The country's core objective through this move is two-fold: to boost climate partnerships as they are expected to coordinate transition plans between developing countries and other developed ones and increase political and diplomatic support to enhance Ethiopia's legitimacy and leverage at regional, continental and/or global climate negotiations. Ethiopia at the centre could thus attract technology transfer, taking its green legacy initiative capacity as a springboard for international climate effort though a lot remains to be done.

If Ethiopia is smart enough and systematically use what it has at hand, the bilateral or multilateral frameworks help it strategically link climate transition targeting other issues, including cooperation to generate investments for the energy, technology, infrastructure, and transportation sectors. Given its low-carbon energy through technologies and limited public and private investments, Ethiopia needs to be a key player in climate change fight.

Country's climate diplomacy must also engage the private-sector and industry-led climate finance networks. Such a positive move comports with Ethiopia's traditional stance that countries historically responsible for the majority of the emissions should support the low-carbon transitions of

emerging countries.

Yes, with rapid advancement in renewable energy, energy efficiency, and smart agriculture initiatives, Ethiopia has to work hard to pro-actively address climate change. These policies, and technologies, among others could serve as models for other developing nations to emulate. Ethiopia's strategic engagements abroad will be hard to achieve without reforming domestic capacity. It is necessary to have designated officials with the mandate and expertise on global climate issues who can draft, manage, and coordinate its climate policies.

No question about it, countries need to cut man-made greenhouse gas emissions drastically, phase out fossil fuels and move to renewable energy. They need to be more efficient and use less energy, and need to tackle deforestation. Besides, being involved in a community initiative seeking a role in a private sector or government organization focused on sustainability, or enrolling in an educational pursuit will lead to a fulfilling role.

Restoring and protecting nature may provide nations like ours with highly protected ecosystems that can also benefit biodiversity, providing a win-win fashion for nature.

Across the globe, communities are already recognizing that adaptation must also be part of the response to climate change. From flood-prone coastal towns like Dire Dawa to regions Oromia and Somalia facing increased droughts, a new wave of initiatives focuses on boosting resilience. Those include managing or preventing land erosion, building micro-grids and other energy systems built to withstand disruptions, and designing buildings with rising flood catastrophe in mind.

Climate change is happening now, and it's the most serious threat to life on our planet, no doubt. Luckily, there are plenty of solutions to climate change and they are well-understood. Core to all climate change solutions is reducing greenhouse gas emissions, which must get to zero as soon as possible. Because both forests and oceans play vitally important roles in regulating our climate, increasing the natural ability of forests and oceans to absorb carbon dioxide can also help stop global warming.

In a nutshell, the main ways, among others, to stop climate change are to pressure government and business to keep fossil fuels in the ground, invest in renewable energy, switch to sustainable transport, restore nature to absorb more carbon, protect forests like the Amazon. It is quite important to say something about the latter. Yes, forests are crucial in the fight against climate change, and protecting them is an important climate solution. Cutting down forests on an industrial scale destroys giant trees which could be sucking up huge amounts of carbon. It is with this colossal understanding that Ethiopia is well embarking on planting tree seedlings and nurturing them accordingly year by year.

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



# Editorial

## Ethiopia revamps role in BRICS for mutual benefits

During the recent meeting of BRICS Foreign Ministers, Foreign Affairs Minister Taye Atskesellasiye has indicated the commitment of Ethiopia to enhance its role in the BRICS bloc in line with its national development priorities. The Minister's statement also indicates that Ethiopia always remains committed to maintaining the benefits and interests of developing countries.

Our world is home to eight billion people who live in more than 200 sovereign nations and territories. They are all endowed with equal rights that are recognized by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). People of the world need to exchange trade and services among themselves so as to thrive on the planet. Such exchange goes without being limited to the borders that define the sovereign countries that exist today in the world. They should rather be regulated by laws so as to run smooth exchange. Yet all of them do not have equal levels of development politically, economically and socially. This has created a loophole where the giants can take advantage of their economic strength to decide over matters of the weaker ones. This takes place even at the disadvantage of the weaker or poor ones. Hence, to fully claim that all the countries and people of the world are equal, there should be a system that accommodates the interests of the disadvantaged.

Indeed, Ethiopia has been working with due effort to ensure its political and economic sovereignty as well as that of fellow developing countries in general and Africa countries in particular. As such Ethiopia has played leading role in various international and multilateral struggles like pan Africanism, non-Aligned movement ... etc.

This is all for the benefit of the entire people of the world without discrimination and out of interest to see a free and fair world order where Ethiopia can benefit from it equally. Ensuring a fairer world order is important for every country and every citizen. But the reality on the ground is contrary to such a situation. And many people are suffering from the unfair and unbalanced world order. Therefore, it is mandatory to change this order and bring about a better world where everyone can enjoy their political independence as well as economic prosperity fairly.

Ethiopia has for long been fighting such aggression and imbalance in all forms like colonialism and the subsequent subjugation of developing countries. It has also paid a price in reflecting the interests and voice of the developing countries in many forums like the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), G-77 Plus China as well as the continental and regional blocs of African Union (AU) and Inter Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD).

Ethiopia still works relentlessly to ensure the benefits of nations to make them stand at an equal footing. Through its membership in BRICS too, Ethiopia will continue to work towards peace and development of all other developing countries.

As Foreign Minister Taye reiterated during the summit Ethiopia maintains its resolve to the collective pursuit of peace, progress, inclusive and sustainable development as well as effective multilateralism.



## The Ethiopian Herald

Established in 1943

Published daily except Mondays  
By The Ethiopian Press Agency

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The Ethiopian Herald

# Opinion

## Developing countries and their burning issues represented at BRICS meeting

BY STAFF REPORTER

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi on Tuesday attended the BRICS Foreign Ministers' Dialogue with Developing Countries (BRICS+) in the Russian city of Nizhny Novgorod.

The dialogue saw participation from the BRICS countries and 12 major developing countries with regional influence, including Thailand, Laos, Vietnam, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Kazakhstan, Belarus, Turkey, Mauritania, Cuba, Venezuela and Bahrain.

Wang, also a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, stated that BRICS+ serves as a vital dialogue platform for the BRICS nations towards the broader emerging markets and developing countries. It has long been a dynamic force for BRICS development and has become a flag of South-South cooperation.

The Chinese foreign minister noted that we are in an era of turmoil and chaos. The Ukraine crisis and Gaza conflict are protracted, challenges like cyber security and climate change are emerging one after another, and a certain country, in order to maintain its unipolar hegemony, is rallying allies for unilateral sanctions, erecting protectionist walls, and weaponizing economic and financial measures. In addition, the North-South divide is widening, and the global economic recovery has faced setbacks.

Meanwhile, the collective rise of emerging markets and developing countries significantly drives the process towards a multipolar world. A new wave of technological and industrial revolutions is emerging, propelling numerous countries onto a fast development track, Wang pointed out.

The Global South is no longer a silent majority but a new awakened force, he stressed.

The Chinese foreign minister made a three-point proposal on how developing countries can create new opportunities amidst these changes: uphold universal security and jointly address challenges; prioritize development and join hands with progressive forces; and uphold fairness and justice, and improve global governance.

During the meeting, the participants highly praised the strategic significance of the BRICS Foreign Ministers' Dialogue with Developing Countries, noting that the BRICS+ model facilitates unity and cooperation among developing countries, enhancing the Global South's influence and building a more just and reasonable international order.

They agreed to uphold the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, oppose unilateralism and hegemonism, insist on resolving conflicts and differences through dialogue and consultation, promote political solutions to international hotspots, and achieve a ceasefire in Gaza as soon as possible.

They also called for reforms to the international financial system, enhanced cooperation in digital economy, infrastructure and other areas,

safeguarding the stability of the global industrial supply chain, narrowing the development gap, and achieving shared progress.

On Tuesday, Wang also met with Thai Foreign Minister Maris Sangiampongsa, and exchanged views with other foreign ministers attending the dialogue.

Meanwhile, The BRICS Expert Forum, BRICS Goals in the Context of a New World Order, took place on the sidelines of the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum, organized by the Rossiya Segodnya media group and Xinhua News Agency.

The expert panel included First Deputy State Duma Speaker Alexander Zhukov, philosopher and public figure Alexander Dugin, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Brazilian Center for International Relations Jose Pio Borges, Director General of the Russian International Affairs Council Ivan Timofeyev, Vice Rector of the National Research University - Higher School of Economics and Head of the BRICS Expert Council-Russia Viktoria Panova, Director of the BRICS Institute in New Delhi Binod Singh Ajatshatru, President of the BRICS International Forum Purnima Anand (India), Director of the Center for BRICS Studies at Fudan University Shen Yi (China), Vice President of Xinhua Institute (Cui Feng (China), Executive Director of the Institute for Global Dialogue Philani Mthembu (South Africa), Director of the Center for Africa-China Studies (CACS) at the University of Johannesburg Merthold (David) Monyae (South Africa), as well as experts from leading think tanks and educational centers in Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, the UAE, Russia and Saudi Arabia.

The moderator, Director General of the Rossiya Segodnya International Media Group Dmitry Kiselev, opened the discussion pointing out that a new international system, a new architecture of society is being forged today, the BRICS association being a key element of this new global system.

In his welcome address to the forum participants, Editor-in-Chief of Xinhua News Agency Lyu Yansong emphasized that the BRICS countries need to stay united to rebuff coercive actions and resist economic pressure aimed at breaking their cooperative ties.

During several sessions, the speakers discussed the main BRICS goals and objectives, opportunities for stepping up cooperation in trade, global innovation, mutual payments in national currencies, stronger partnerships in education, and creating a common BRICS cultural space. They also participated in the SPIEF Plenary Session attended by Russian President Vladimir Putin, Bolivian President Luis Arce and Zimbabwean President Emmerson Mnangagwa.

The heads of the Rossiya Segodnya and Xinhua signed an agreement to host the BRICS Expert Forum in May 2024 during Vladimir Putin's state visit to China, the President's first foreign trip since his official inauguration.

Sources: Xinhua

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



# Business & Economy

## Irrigation development - Somali region's new work culture

BY BACHA ZEWDIE

The Ethiopian government is registering encouraging results in its efforts to increase productivity to achieve self-sufficiency in food thereby avoiding importation. Thus, in addition to increasing the yield and productivity from autumn and main harvest season, the ongoing summer irrigated wheat cultivation has created an opportunity to supply wheat to the foreign market on top of meeting the national demand.

The cultivation of crops is expanding even in the regions where pastoralists live. In these regions, the cultivation of wheat and rice as well as vegetables and fruits is being done on a large scale, which is starting to change the lives of the pastoralists.

People of the Somali region, who are pastoralists and engaged in business, can be mentioned as an example here. Meaningful work is being done by making irrigation development a new work culture in the region.

West Gode Irrigation Development Project is located in Shebele Zone of the region. Seven of the zone's 10 districts are bordered with Wabe Shebele River. Berhano is among the seven districts that has plain landscape and fertile soil suitable for agriculture. Though it has lived close to the River for centuries, it has made zero use of it.

In recent years, however, following the government's attention to irrigation development, the desert plains and fertile land have started to live in harmony with the Wabe Shebele River. Today, this flat land that is hard to see its end has been resplendent and has a new natural look. From garden vegetables to various crops are grown in it.

Another interesting thing is that it is not only water that flows in the canal built for irrigation. There is another food item that follows in the water, fish. This fish has become another blessing for the environment. The fish has become their daily food, especially for the people who earn their lives as laborers in the fields.

It is not difficult to understand how easy life has become in the West Gode Irrigation Development Project for those who saw these workers throwing their hooks and pulling out fish without much effort or fatigue. The actual meaning of "Yelemat Tirufat" has been seen in practice.

Abdulkhikim Ismail is an investor who is engaged in planting rice and taking care of 50 hectares of land he invested organized in Soyol Cooperative Association. He stated that he spent his life in exile in Europe due to the pressure that was put on him by the previous government.

He returned to his country and enjoyed the peace found in the region that enabled him engage in irrigation development. The rice sprouts planted on half of the 50 hectares of the local investment farm have started to turn green. He has prepared the rest of the land for the same purpose.

Abdullahi said that if the local government gives him more land, he has the capacity to cultivate. When investing in the agricultural sector, he doesn't just think of profit. But to be a role model that the pastoralists have a



*Somali region irrigation project created new work culture*



talent of leading life in other sector apart from animal husbandry.

He is proud for being a pioneer for the pastoralists on the banks of the Shebele River which will make the Somali region famous for rice production.

As he said, West Gode Irrigation Development Project diverted the River's water and made it ready for irrigation, which has created a favorable environment for him and other residents to engage in irrigation development. The project's provision of tractors, best seeds, medicine and monitoring and support services made them more motivated for the work. Since the reform, peace prevailed in Somali region allowed him and his friends to come back from exile and work on development projects.

"Somali region has never had peace in any regime," Abdulkhikim said and adding; "Peace is the basis for the development and progress of the country in order to do everything we plan to be successful, to move freely from place to place. The peace that has now prevailed in the Somali region has greatly benefited the Somali people. Everyone should stand by the government so that the entire nation can benefit from peace."

"With peace in the region, it has opened the door for us, the local natives who were living in exile, to enter our country and participate in development work; I expect that others will look at us and enter their country and participate in development work. I thank Allah for showing me such a time. I thank the government for everything it has done to maintain peace in the region," he said.

Alkeherat Co-operative association is another one that is found working on land for the project. It is also cultivating rice. The representative of the association, Muhammad Noor Sheikh said that the association has taken over 25 hectares of land from the project and is producing various crops and marketing them.

Now, the association has planted rice for the first time. After it was confirmed by the research center that rice can be grown, it planted rice on the 25 hectares of land provided without hesitation. Currently, the rice is at the bud stage.

Mentioning that rice is a crop that ripens in three months, he said after harvest, the land is ready to use for another purpose.

Muhammad added; "It is common to use rice for food in the Somali region. If it can be produced here in the future, it will save foreign currency cost paid to import the product. It will also allow the local farmers to gradually get familiar of rice production."

As explained by Engineer Abduwahid Muhidin, West Bank Irrigation Development Project Manager; the government studied the preference of the district for irrigation development and built the "West Gode Irrigation Development Project" and opened it to users in 2024. The project covers a total of 7,600 hectares; currently, only two thousand hectares are being cultivated.

Summer wheat, corn, sorghum, and sesame have been cultivated since the irrigation project was put into service. Onions and types of grass that are used for animal fodder that meet the needs of pastoralists are also planted.

With the support of the project and the participation of investors, for the first time, a plan to produce rice on 800 hectares of land has been put into operation. Research conducted earlier has shown encouraging results.

Gode Irrigation Development Project has established its own research station in the same project with the support from the Regional Agricultural Research Center. Therefore, nothing is sown or planted without its effectiveness being tested.

Mentioning that most of the residents of Berhano district lead a pastoral life, Engineer Abduwahid said that after the irrigation project started, they have been cultivating corn, sesame and onions and practicing farming. They will be supported to develop rice production experience through technology transfer.

He recalled that before the West Gode Irrigation Development Project came into operation, products such as onions and tomatoes were brought to the local residents from Oromia and the southern regions, but now, a new history is being made by marketing the products produced by the project even to Addis Ababa.

There is a plan to produce rice on three thousand hectares of land in the region until the next harvest season. Out of this, 800 hectares of land are planned to be covered with rice in Berhano district alone. Currently, 400 hectares and after the next three months, another 400 hectares of land is planned to be covered with rice seeds.

Regarding the land allotment system, he stated that those who want to work in the irrigation development will be given land according to their capacity if they are first organized and meet the necessary conditions. Their effectiveness will be measured and more supplies will be given to them. In order to get the land they want, they are required to work on a small piece of land first. The reason for following this procedure is because it is desired that the land need not be freeze.

They will get inputs from the project, such as the best seeds, tractors, herbicides and pesticides. They will also be provided with professional support and supervision. All that is expected from them will be to complete the workforce and get to work.

The irrigation development is more than just a new work culture for the local community; it is inviting investors to the irrigation. Job opportunities have been created for the region and many people from different parts of the country from farm preparation to harvest.

Regarding the agricultural work of the region, Mustafe Mohammed, President of Somali Region explained that for the first time in the region, three thousand hectares of land has been started to grow rice. Out of the 11 zones in the region, Shebele and City zones have been identified as preferred for rice production.

The head of the State mentioned that these zones have high water potential and fertile land and they are suitable for rice production. They are striving to make the food self-sufficiency program a reality with the produce using the resources of the area.



## Art & Culture

# African music explosion biggest cultural industry in Africa?

BY MULUGETA GUDETA

Africa's minerals and natural resources seldom claim the headlines in discussions about the continent's emerging industries. On the contrary, culture, or the legal and illegal business in Africa's cultural and historical relics and the revenues thereof are bound to become Africa's newest booming industry. Although invisible and non-quantifiable, the business in African cultural relics are said to be the biggest underground business in the world. From Europe to America and China and to the rest of the world, African culture is in big demand from the biggest museums, the biggest online marketing sites, the biggest collectors and the biggest art lovers.

It is difficult or nearly impossible to estimate the annual turnover in African culture industry for many reasons. The first and most important reason is the fact that the African culture or art market is an illegal one and data on the volume of transaction is kept tightly secret. The second reason is that the African art market is conducted with the collaboration of official European quarters, allegedly including officials in high places, museum curators and the Mafia-like networks of facilitators, sellers, contacts and bank managers that are suspected to be indirectly involved either by having huge stakes or by keeping figures on such transactions unavailable to the media and the African culture activists.

What is the secret behind this growing demand in African culture? There is no secret about it. Africa is not only endowed with tremendous natural and human resources that are not yet properly harnessed or exploited. It is also endowed with amazing cultural and historical relics that have long attracted the attention of the Western world. Colonialism did not come to Africa in search of these relics. It came in search of territories, natural resources and geopolitical advantages. Yet, Africa's cultural items were so beautiful and so mysterious, so spiritual and religious in their nature, that the colonial authorities could not resist their allures.

African art has first become a subject of discussion and interest in Europe when it became the source of inspiration to many renowned European artists, including Picasso who looked in the African mask in particular, the potential for cubist expressionism that quickly became the talk of the European art world. "In the 19th century and as a direct result of imperialism thousands of African objects had arrived in Europe. Far from being considered artworks, they were considered artifacts of colonial conquests and held little to no economic value.

But during the early 1900s, with Picasso leading the way, African arts aesthetics became a source of profound inspiration for the School of Paris, which had been searching for new and radical ways of representation. Picasso saw in African figuration a religious depth and ritual purpose that both startled



and moved him. Its sophisticated use of flat planes and bold contouring was unlike anything the artist had encountered before."

However, the impact of African art on European modernism was not limited to Picasso and Cubism. There were also other famous European artists who used African art techniques in their works. "But while the impact of African art on Picasso and the birth Cubism has been examined tirelessly, the works that inspired an entire movement are rarely examined in their own right. Instead, non-Western art is often viewed as the tool that enabled European artists such as Gauguin, Braque...African artisans have been abstracting the human figure for centuries."

However, this love affair between African and European art forms did not last long. And the most of the Western artists who made extensive use of African art to promote their careers quickly forgot about it perhaps feeling embarrassed to borrow from a colonized people and a colonized culture, something that in their views might diminish their importance.

The African art industry is a rather recent phenomenon. It would be erroneous to conclude that the use of African art forms by Picasso and the other western artists had contributed to the birth of the African art industry as we know it now. There is a long temporal gulf between the rise of modernism and the birth of African art or culture industry which dates back only to the last decades of the 20th century.

The contemporary African art market is a thriving business despite the global economic and geopolitical challenges. According to Art Tactic, a website on African art market, "Despite global economic and geo-political challenges, the African art market only fell by 8.4% in 2023 compared to the general art market which saw a decrease of around 18%." Given the fact that the African art market emerged recently, and that the global art business is long entrenched dating back

to more than a century ago, it would be safe to say that African art is still vibrant and on the rise, enjoying higher demands that the global demand put together.

Among the triggers of the African art and culture market are, Africa's music industry which a different story in its own right. The rise of African music to global prominence is an even recent event but its growth has always been impressive as its recognition conquest range from winning the Grammy Awards to irresistible worldwide expansion. African music was considered as an independent category and has proved that it is indeed a rising, vibrant and world-conquering genre of music that deserved the honor at the Grammys.

According to other sources, "the decision to include an African-specific award came about because, music from the continent is now prevalent everywhere in the world. This year, Afrobeats has been accepted as an independent music genre fast expanding throughout the world. This year, i.e.2024, Tia from South Africa has won the First-Ever Grammy award for Best African Music Performance.

According to another source, "The African music industry is currently enjoying a spectacular rise, with its diverse genres and talents not only conquering the global charts, but also earning a place on the prestigious Grammys stage. From electrifying performances at the FIFA World cup to the creation of a new Grammy category, African music is undergoing a true transformation, overcoming long-standing structural challenges."

Sub-Saharan Africa in particular is revealed to be the fastest growing region in terms of recorded music revenue in 2022, according to the World Music Report 2023 from the International Federation of the Phonographic industry. This growth is fueled by newer genres such as Afrobeats and amapiano, which blend distinct West African styles and South African kwaito, respectively.

Africa's cultural industries include film, television, radio, music books and press. There are also creative cultural industries like design, architecture and advertising. Africa's culture industries are estimated to be a huge industry. However, due to lack of information or data on the volume of financial transactions, the industry is still shrouded in secrecy or reluctance to divulge the true figures; maybe for fear taxation and other obligations to the respective governments under which they are operating. It is however absurd to hide figures about the volume of transactions in an industry that could thrive through transparency or openness.

As we saw above, Africa's cultural industry consists of many layers of activities, including music and painting that are prominent. The African music industry is the single most booming industry among them maybe followed by the film industry that has become a huge income earner both for the film studios and for the Nigerian government through taxation and other revenues.

That is why that some of the biggest Nigerian banks were behind the boom in Nigerian cinema as they were providing huge loans to promising studios that launched or started the phenomenal growth. However, the film industry cannot be considered the biggest culture industry on the continent in terms of revenue compared to the music industry, because it is largely confined to Nigeria while the music industry has become global in its reach.

The Nigeria model of expansion in the film industry could perhaps be used by the few studios that are still alive in the country while most of them have now disappeared for lack of investment. The problem may be that the banks themselves are wrestling with their own problems in managing their resources. This is not clearly the ideal time for banks to engage in high risk investments and until someone, sometime would come up with an alternative solution to support the Ethiopian cultural industry.



# Indepth

## African countries could unlock billions in local and global trade – what's working and what's not

### What's Africa's state of trade?

Despite the continent's immense resources and untapped potential, Africa's share of global trade remains small. It is estimated, for instance, that Africa could annually be generating US\$21.9 billion more from exports to the world. This limits the continent's economic growth and ability to lift millions out of poverty.

Trade among African nations is also low, at about 16% of the continent's total trade volume. This is much lower than intra-regional trade levels in Europe (68%) and Asia (59%).

These statistics have serious implications. Enhancing Africa's trade within the region and globally could spark development, create jobs and reduce poverty.

A host of challenges get in the way of Africa's trade potential. The continent faces infrastructural deficiencies, cumbersome trade regulations, and inadequate logistical support. These barriers inflate business costs and deter trade within the continent and with the rest of the world.

### Why is trade with other nations important?

International trade is a powerful tool for economic growth and consumer welfare. It allows nations to use their comparative advantages, tap into larger markets, and benefit from economies of scale. It promotes the spread of knowledge and technology across borders, stimulating innovation and productivity. By fostering cultural exchange and interdependence among nations, trade also contributes to peace and stability.

To get the full benefits of trade, countries and regions need sound policies and institutional frameworks that ease global market integration and simplify trade.

### What's Aid for Trade, and how does it work?

Aid for Trade is an initiative that is being spearheaded by the World Trade Organisation. Launched in 2005, it's aimed at helping developing countries, particularly the least developed ones, to increase trade. The initiative has enhanced the infrastructure and trade capacity of recipient countries, increasing export performance. But there are still challenges around integrating countries into global markets.

The initiative's projects target trade-related challenges in five main areas including trade policy and regulations, trade infrastructure, productive capacity, trade-related adjustment.

A staggering US\$647.4 billion was



disbursed under the initiative to 146 developing countries from 2006 to 2022. In 2022, disbursements from the initiative to developing countries reached US\$51.1 billion, benefiting 178,141 projects. It's been seen to lower trade costs, increase trade volumes and create jobs in the countries involved.

Like traditional aid, the beneficiary countries receive demand-driven funding from donors to finance their priority projects. But these must be trade-related, and the package includes technical assistance and technical cooperation. Also, unlike traditional aid, funds allocated may not always translate into direct financial inflows that support a recipient's broader development goals.

### Has it worked for Africa?

Africa has been the second biggest beneficiary of the Aid for Trade initiative after Asia. Under the initiative, countries on the continent received a total of US\$233.18 billion from 2006 to 2022. This accounted for 36% of the total disbursements extended to all developing countries. It covered infrastructure, capacity building, and policy and adjustment costs.

Geographical and logistical challenges often inflate trade costs in Africa. That's why the initiative mostly funds projects like port facilities, trade corridors and telecommunications infrastructure across the continent.

In our recent analysis, we examined the initiative's impact on trade costs. We found that the initiative's trade cost reduction effects were higher among African countries with relatively good infrastructure networks.

### What are Africa's key success stories?

Aids for Trade projects have improved transport networks, customs procedures and trade-related institutions.

The success stories from Africa include: The Busia One-Stop Border Post Project between Uganda and Kenya. The project was launched in 2010 with funding from the World Bank's East African Trade and Transport Project. It aimed to reduce the average border crossing time by 30%. The project has since cut the average time it takes to cross from Busia (Uganda) to Busia (Kenya) by 80%. The customs processing time in Busia, Kenya, is now down by 98%, while that of Busia, Uganda, and has dropped by 69%.

The Chirundu Border Post in Zimbabwe, this pilot project was launched in 2005 with funding and technical assistance from the Japan International Co-operation Agency and the World Bank. The upgrade has enabled faster movement of people, vehicles and goods between Zimbabwe and Zambia.

The East Africa Trade and Transport Facilitation Project, launched in 2006, it aimed to improve traffic flow on the corridor linking Mombasa seaport in Kenya to Kampala (Uganda), Kigali (Rwanda), the DRC and South Sudan. It was funded by the World Bank at US\$260 million, and supported by the African Development Bank, the EU, Japan, and the UK. The project has reduced transit times from Mombasa to Kampala from 15 to 5 days and cut average waiting times at Mombasa port from 19 to 13 days.

These projects are all supported by multilateral agencies and bilateral sources

of Aid for Trade funding. Their success shows the initiative can lower trade barriers and enhance economic efficiency across the continent.

### What remains to be done?

Africa still faces capacity constraints. It has limited funds for research and development, low capability to negotiate trade issues, and challenges in meeting multilateral trading commitments. Market access difficulties, such as restrictive rules of origin, also continue to undermine the Aid for Trade gains. Weak institutional frameworks, infrastructure deficiencies and widespread corruption still inflate the region's trading costs. Matters are also complicated by poor regional coordination, varying regulations and conflicting standards across borders.

What's needed are institutional capacity, transparency, accountability in aid administration, robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.

The Aid for Trade projects should also match the developmental priorities of recipient countries. Countries need to develop policies that create a favourable business environment. This means reducing bureaucracy, enhancing judicial independence, and protecting investor rights.

Finally, countries should commit to regional cooperation to boost intra-African trade. This includes harmonising customs regulations and standardising trade documentation. It also means investing in continent-wide infrastructure projects that link local markets to major trade hubs.

(SOURCE: THE CONVERSATION)



# Law & Politics

## Ethiopia - bridging Africa with Far East

BY SOLOMON WASSIHUN

A decade ago, Tesfaye was one of several Ethiopians who lived in South Korea for a few years as postgraduate students. In the first month after he arrived in the capital Seoul, he had the opportunity to visit a nearby small town called Chuncheon. He was not prepared for what he would find there.

“I was amazed. I did not expect to come across a museum, the Memorial Hall for Ethiopian Veterans in the Korean War, which honours Ethiopian soldiers who fought for the freedom of South Korea. What’s even more amazing is that of all the soldiers from different nations who fought for South Korea as part of the UN mission, only Ethiopians were not captured. I cannot tell you how it feels to hear a story like that about the bravery of your countrymen. It was just a thrilling experience,” says Tesfaye.

This museum was one of the places Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed visited during his second official visit to South Korea a few days ago, which was the first leg of his East Asia tour that he undertook in the company of senior officials, including some of his cabinet ministers and other top officials.

South Korea was the beneficiary of Ethiopian generosity and defence diplomacy in the early 1950s. Over three thousand five hundred of Ethiopia’s finest elite soldiers served under the UN Command to save South Korea from the destructive communist tyranny.

It was a huge political commitment and a logistical nightmare that had its repercussions on Ethiopian politics. Even by today’s modern amenities standards, it is a challenging task to transport thousands of soldiers by train to Djibouti and then by ship from Africa up to the Far East. The Korean War forged a historical bridge between Africa and the Far East. It takes its chapter in Ethiopia’s modern military history. Even, Telahun Gesesse, the greatest Ethiopian singer of all time, played a timeless popular song called “While I was in the Far East”, which was written by a Korean War veteran.

The Ethiopian battalion, Kagnew, the only African force in the war [besides that of white-ruled South Africa], fought victoriously in more than 230 engagements against the enemy. Hundreds of Ethiopian soldiers paid the ultimate price, and several others were wounded while defending the freedom of Korea with unsurpassed valour.

The Ethiopian soldiers remained in South Korea as peacekeepers until 1965 and provided humanitarian aid to orphaned Korean children. They succeeded in their mission and saved South Korea from communist rule. Hence, South Korea has transformed from a poor, aid-dependent nation into one of the world’s largest donors.

Ironically, Ethiopia, which was a staunch defender of South Koreans against communism, became communist itself a few years later, in 1974, and remained so

until 1991, until the final days of the Soviet Union, ruining all the possibility of making economic miracles as South Koreans and Singaporeans did in the past few decades.

Thus, the Ethio-South Korea ties are not an ordinary one. It is a special one consolidated by the spilt blood and broken bones of thousands of Ethiopian veterans of the Korean War. The present generation of South Koreans recognizes Ethiopians’ huge contribution in laying the foundation for the freedom and prosperity they enjoy today. This is why, the Ethiopian delegation to South Korea was warmly greeted last week by a huge South Korean crowd lining the street and street dancers shouting the Amharic word “Amsegenalhu”, which means thank you.

South Koreans have expressed their gratitude to Ethiopians in practice also, by involving themselves in various socio-economic development activities in Ethiopia. They have built hospitals, schools, roads, etc. They have assisted the agricultural mechanisation process. Ethiopia is among the top receivers of South Korea’s ODA, Official Development Assistance. The Koreans have also helped Ethiopia with skill and appropriate technology transfer by providing scholarships and training for young competent professionals like Tesfaye.

Nevertheless, given their ties to Ethiopia and their reputation for quality workmanship and civility among Ethiopians, the Koreans could have forged a deeper relationship in socio-economic development than they did so far, especially in trade and investment. The main concern of Korea regarding African countries seems to be securing access to mineral resources, just like most developed economies.

Ethiopia has much to offer South Korea in this regard as well, as it is well endowed with an abundance of untapped high in-demand mineral resources, such as the highly sought-after rare-earth elements [green metals], lithium, precious metals, gemstones and radioactive elements, all of which require huge investment and advanced hi-tech capacity.

Last week’s visit of the Ethiopian delegation would spur the historical Ethio-Korean ties to propel forward and achieve their full potential benefiting both nations. The evidence for that are several memoranda of understanding for bilateral cooperation signed between the two nations. The agreements signed include a one billion dollar financing deal over four years for infrastructure, science and technology, health, and urban development projects in various sectors.

The Ethio-Korean relations could be a model and inspiration for other far-eastern nations to consider Ethiopia as a desirable destination for bilateral economic cooperation. Surely, Ethiopia is an increasingly attractive investment destination, as it continues to open up new sectors to international investors that were previously off-limits.

For instance, Singapore, the second destination of the Ethiopian delegation’s visit to East Asia, expressed strong interest in forging economic ties with Ethiopia. It was at the invitation of the Singaporean government that Premier Abiy became the first Ethiopian leader to set foot in the Lion City since Emperor Haile-Selassie did in 1968.

“Prime Minister Abiy and I are committed to taking the bilateral relationship to greater heights. We have agreed to establish bilateral consultations between our foreign ministries to review and explore new areas of cooperation. And we are exploring the possibility of cooperation in new areas like transport, connectivity, digitalization, and capacity-building. Singapore-based companies are interested in expanding their operations in Ethiopia in the agriculture, logistics, and aircraft maintenance sectors. And, as hubs to our respective regions, there is scope for Singapore and Ethiopia to serve as gateways to enhance links between Southeast Asia and Africa.” said the Singaporean Premier.

Apart from its almost miraculous economic transformation within a few decades, Singapore, as a multi-ethnic state that achieved sustainable peace and a stable democratic system of good governance, has a lot of experiences and achievements that would serve as a benchmark for the Ethiopian leaders.

Undoubtedly the foremost experienced Ethiopian leaders at all levels could learn from their Singaporean counterparts the power of servant and democratic leadership and the need for inculcating the full sense of patriotism among citizens, which is mainly willingness to sacrifice one’s benefits, comforts, and personal ambitions in the interest of the development of the nation.

Both Singapore and South Korea are strong economies in Southeast Asia that share the common name Tiger economies, and are driven by export trade and rapid industrialization. Both could offer a good example for Ethiopia to improvise and enrich its economic development agenda.

Ethiopia is one of the few African states having direct flight links with both South Korea and Singapore. This creates fertile ground for advancing business partnerships and people-to-people relations between nations.

The success of the strong bilateral economic cooperation Ethiopia is trying to forge with Singapore and South Korea would bring prosperity that goes beyond its borders to spread to the African continent. In that sense, one could say that Ethiopia is serving as an African interface to build a socio-economic bridge that joins the continent with Southeast Asia.

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**South Koreans have expressed their gratitude to Ethiopians in practice also, by involving themselves in various socio-economic development activities in Ethiopia**  
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# Women in Focus



Meseret Kibiret



Ajaiba Mohammed



Yealemzewed Tilahun



Getenesh Belehu

## Women's involvement in peace process to bring lasting solution

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

Women constitute around 52 percent of the population of the Horn of Africa which justifies their meaningful inclusion in all peace processes. Although there is evidence that they are involved and have achieved tangible results in peace work, they remain a distinct minority in formal peace processes, according to a document published on inclusion of women in peace building processes (negotiation and mediation): Women's peace and security agenda by American Friends Service Committee.

It also stated a study conducted by the Council of Foreign Relations (2019), which analyzed forty-two (42) peace processes and agreements across the globe between 1992-2019 that revealed women only accounted for a mere average of 9.5 percent of peace mediators involved in these processes.

Similarly, research published by Center for Humanitarian Dialogue (HD), beyond the numbers: women's participation in the Kenya National Dialogue and Reconciliation indicated that broader inclusivity in formal peace processes of civil society as well as of women, increases the credibility of the process and contributes to the sustainability of the agreements reached.

"Peace processes characterized by heavy involvement of women have been found to be more legitimate and sustainable compared to those with little or no women's involvement. Civil society members, and indeed women, in peace processes serve as important counterweights to what are, often, political or military interests," it stated.

Despite this growing consensus on the importance of women's participation, many challenges still remain. These vary from the cultural acceptability of having women participate; the focus on the participation of formal fighters and political decision-makers; to the perceived lack of capacity of women who could be effective

***Peace processes characterized by heavy involvement of women have been found to be more legitimate and sustainable compared to those with little or no women's involvement***

representatives within a formal process. Interestingly, in the Kenya case, these traditional challenges were considerably less than in other cases studied, it said.

However, the culture of excluding women is compounded by their treatment as victims of conflicts rather than agents of change which in return diminish their agency.

"While a great number of studies have documented the value of involving women in peace processes, greater attention needs to be paid to the many different ways that women participate – via civil society inclusion, as well as political representatives, within the negotiation teams; as members of the mediation teams; and (though rarely) as mediators," the document emphasized.

During the agenda gathering consultation phase that the Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission held recently, women representatives that were taking part expressed their optimistic view that the National Dialogue could bring for fellow sisters who are the primary victims of unrest.

Representing women at the consultation, Meseret Kibiret, told the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that the dialogue is the best solution to resolve differences. Thus, the National Dialogue would play a significant role in addressing the longstanding differences that have been passed from generation to generation.

"Not only is it vital for resolving challenges but the National Dialogue would play a major role in bringing lasting peace to Ethiopia which could help the nation to focus on its development journey."

Ajaiba Mohammed, another women representative at the consultation indicated that the National Dialogue would create a better Ethiopia for citizens from all walks of life.

Emphasizing that women are amongst the most vulnerable segment of the society during insecurities, she stressed that the National Dialogue has created a platform for people with differences to solve their issues through dialogue thereby creating a better country.

She further urged representatives to exert utmost effort towards the successful realization of the dialogue and meet its major goals.

Yealemzewed Tilahun, another women representative, stated that women have remained the major victims of instability. Thus, the National Dialogue would bring lasting solutions to challenges that Ethiopia has been facing.

"As women take the majority of the responsibility in looking after families and spouses, they have a better chance of shaping

their future, others, as well as children. Thus, involving women in the National Dialogue and solving the challenges they face would bring significant outcomes for the nation."

In order to put an end to the challenges that most women across the country are encountering, the dialogue would have an immense role, she stressed.

For Getenesh Belehu, the National Dialogue would solve the major constraints that women are encountering. Women have been subjected to several challenges during instability as well as were forced to leave their villages. Hence, the National Dialogue would allow bringing lasting peace which could end the sufferings of most women across the country.

"Women could only be safe when peace and stability is ensured in Ethiopia. Therefore, women need to play an active role in each process that would enable the dialogue to meet its expectations," she remarked.

The United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security, unanimously adopted in October 2000, highlights the paramount importance of incorporating women into peace and security processes.

Recently, women's value has been recognized in mediation and negotiation processes. However, the participation of women in peace processes globally and in the region is constrained by under-representation owing to entrenched patriarchal values and norms, non-recognition as legitimate stakeholders, limited resources, and suspicion and mistrust from interested parties, as to the aforementioned document.

Thus, it suggested that despite growing awareness of the vital role women can play in peace building, they still face significant barriers to full participation. "We must work to break down these barriers and create more opportunities for women to contribute meaningfully to peace negotiations and mediation," it emphasized.



# Society



## Empowering GBV survivors through continuous support

BY TEWODROS KASSA

In a significant stride towards empowering survivors of Gender-Based Violence (GBV), Union of Ethiopian Women and Children Associations (UEWCA), supported by the African Women Organization (AWO), have successfully implemented a series of impactful initiatives at the GBV Rehabilitation Center of Meseret Humanitarian Organization located at Addis Ababa City Administration. The efforts aim to enhance the capacity of GBV rehabilitation centers, support livelihood opportunities for survivors, and provide essential hygiene materials to foster dignity and well-being.

With this same drive, at an event held recently, the Union of Ethiopian Women Children Associations (UEWCA) distributed materials to strengthen GBV rehabilitation centers.

The handover was conducted by UEWCA Executive Director Azeb Kelemework and received by Meseret Humanitarian Organization (MHO) Executive Director of Meseret Azage.

According to Azeb, the support was made by the Austrian Federal Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection through African Women Organization that is based in Austria, Vienna. The Austrian Federal Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection, in collaboration with the African Women Organization, have consistently supported various initiatives. Similar activities have previously been conducted in the Oromia and Tigray states.

Sofar, UEWCA has offered comprehensive medicines and medical instruments valued over 363 thousand Birr to MHO rehabilitation center to strengthen the GBV Victims Rehabilitation Center. This support includes diagnostic tools such as blood pressure apparatus, thermometers,

and glucometers, along with essential medications like amoxicillin and paracetamol. This initiative is designed to benefit approximately 100 GBV survivors to receive timely and effective medical care, which is crucial for their recovery and overall well-being, she indicated.

She emphasized that this support from the project significantly bolsters MHO's ability to provide comprehensive healthcare services to GBV victims. The availability of these medical instruments and medicines ensures that beneficiaries receive timely treatment and regular health checks.

By addressing both acute and chronic health issues, this provision not only improves immediate health outcomes but also contributes to the long-term health and resilience of GBV survivors in the center.

In addition, in accordance with MHO's business plan, UEWCA has distributed various livelihood materials purchased with Birr 962,000 and supported 80 GBV victims in establishing small businesses. This initiative, funded by AWO, aims to empower survivors by providing resources tailored to specific business ventures.

As part of this initiative, essential materials were provided to 40 survivors, including traditional coffee rekebot, coffee and tea cups, chairs, coffee grinders, and other necessary items. The coffee and tea businesses provide a steady income, helping the victims achieve economic independence and reintegrate into society with renewed purpose and dignity.

Accordingly, this initiative not only addresses their immediate needs but also promotes long-term self-sufficiency. Continuous support and monitoring is essential to ensure the sustained success of these newly established businesses. This project exemplifies a successful

model of providing practical support to GBV victims, fostering both immediate relief and long-term empowerment

Similarly, 23 survivors received chips making machines, plastic nets, knives, potato peelers, and other essential equipment. The provision of these materials has enabled the survivors to start their own chip making and selling businesses, creating a steady source of income and fostering economic independence. Beneficiaries have reported a significant boost in confidence and a renewed sense of purpose as they have embarked on their entrepreneurial journeys. The chips businesses are not only providing financial stability but also helping the women to reintegrate into society with dignity and self-sufficiency.

Aspiring to sustainably transform GBV survivors' lives, UEWCA provided 12 survivors with equipped materials for fast food production, including burners, casseroles, and serving utensils. By providing them with the necessary equipment and tools, the initiative has enabled the beneficiaries to generate income, regain a sense of purpose and self-sufficiency. The fast-food businesses not only provide financial stability but also offer a platform for the survivors to contribute to their communities and lead fulfilling lives.

Moreover, survivors received juice-making machines, vegetable shelves, and the like materials. Equipped with the necessary tools and resources, the beneficiaries have seized the opportunity to establish their own juice enterprises, thereby not only securing financial stability but also reclaiming a sense of control and dignity in their lives. These businesses not only serve as sources of income but also represent platforms for the survivors to contribute meaningfully to their communities and foster a sense of belonging.

Survivors were also provided with

traditional Injera baking stoves and 50 kilograms of Teff flour, along with necessary cooking utensils. By providing them with the tools and resources needed to start their businesses, UEWCA has empowered the survivors to take control of their futures and pave the way towards economic stability

“Recognizing the profound impact of GBV on building up self-esteem and social integration, UEWCA has distributed essential hygiene materials to 100 GBV victims in the Center worth 426,882 Birr. The comprehensive package includes feminine hygiene products, toothbrushes, soap, shampoo, body lotion, and other personal care items. This initiative aims to enhance the beneficiaries' sense of self-worth and well-being, alleviating the burden of personal care expenses and promoting emotional resilience.”

According to Meseret, the distribution of hygiene materials represents a tangible manifestation of UEWCA's commitment to providing comprehensive support to GBV survivors. Beyond the practical benefits of improving hygiene and health, these materials serve as symbols of care and validation, affirming the worth and dignity of each individual. By addressing the holistic needs of the beneficiaries, UEWCA aims to create a supportive environment conducive to healing and growth.

This initiative underscores the importance of holistic care in the rehabilitation and empowerment of GBV survivors, fostering a sense of dignity and resilience as they navigate the path towards recovery and social reintegration, she said.

In sum, this strategic initiative demonstrates the transformative potential of providing targeted support to vulnerable populations. By equipping GBV survivors with the resources needed to start their own businesses, the project fosters economic empowerment and contributes to their overall well-being.





# Published Weekly in Collaboration with Haramaya University

## HU student's water project addresses 10k household

BY EPHREM ANDARGACHEW

Haramaya University (HU) College of Health and Medical Sciences prospective students have accomplished clean water projects in Damota, Maya City. The project would provide access to clean water for 10,000 households.

HU Administration and Development Vice President Dr. Abdi Mohammed said that the university has given a mandate related to teaching and learning, research, and community engagement. Aside from the University deed, HU has been attempting to alleviate community problems through student engagement. Hence, prospective students at the HU College of Health and Medical Sciences serve as excellent models.

Because the students have helped the community in preventing cholera outbreaks, lowering maternal and infant mortality, and establishing community pharmacies via practical group projects. Especially, the Maya-Damota clean drinking water project that was built in 6 weeks for 1.6 million birr is a great example. Because if the job had been given to another contractor, it would have been done in 9-12 months, he elaborated.

He also stated that the water project will supply clean water to 10,000 households. It



is also intended for human and animal drinking and laundry. As a result, this reduces water contamination.

The Oromia Regional States East Hararge Zone Health Office Head Mohammadin Kebir Hussain stated that the water project in Damota will assist in reducing the frequency of water-borne diseases in the area.

Furthermore, the students' efforts are noteworthy in terms of resolving community concerns by taking on tasks that were previously confined to urban health facilities. Hence, he asked the community to maintain and carefully manage the water project.

HU College of Health and Medical Sciences practical training coordinator Abdi Birhanu in his part noted that students, in eight locations, have completed a variety of community-based

projects in the East Hararge zone.

Before medical and health science students graduate, they are assigned practical project work. As a result, the students have been working in groups to complete various activities by identifying problems in a certain area. This, in turn, not only alleviates the community's problems but also allows projects to be finished more quickly with public engagement, he stated.

HU Prospect Student Dr. Bereket Emanuel stated that as "final year graduate students, we organized ourselves under the name of Maya Group." Then we came to Damota rural kebele to address society's most pressing issue: safe drinking water.

"As a result, we were able to construct drinking water facilities, which benefited the community's health. The project is critical not only for solving



societal problems, but also for socializing and learning about our community's culture, norms, customs, language, and so on," he said.