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Semereta Sewasew



Hassen Muhammed

Ethio-China robust business ties expedite mutual benefits

BY YESUF ENDRIS

ADDIS ABABA- Owing to the opening up of a Chinese market for Ethiopia's products, the two countries' commercial ties have been demonstrating steadfast progress and ensuring mutual benefits, the Finance State Minister said.

Speaking at the Ethio-China Business Cooperation Promotion Conference here yesterday, Finance State Minister Semereta Sewasew stated that the two countries' business-to-business tie is growing from

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PSI promotes concerted intervention to address housing hurdles

BY MESERET BEHAILU

ADDIS ABABA – The Policy Studies Institute (PSI) called for concert efforts of stakeholders to address housing challenges and improve living standards for millions of citizens.

Habitat for Ethiopia Humanity (HFEH) in collaboration with PSI,

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Samson Tolessa

GlZ hails Ethiopia's energy strategy

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Ethiopia reaffirms readiness to 4th UN Conference on Financing

BY STAFF REPORTER

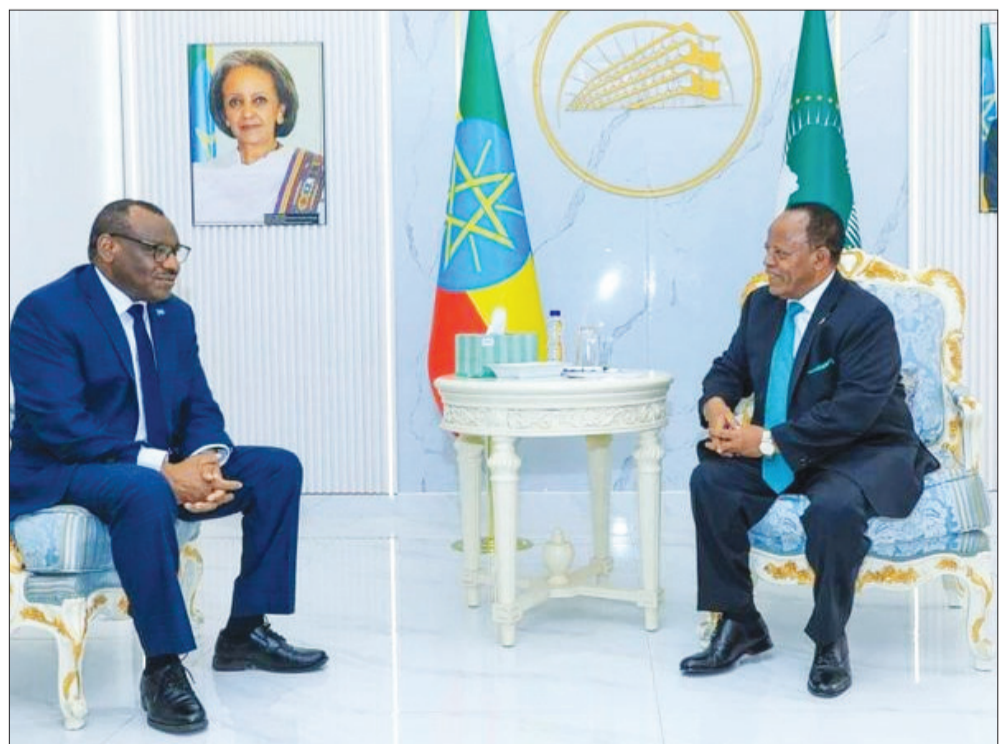
ADDIS ABABA- Foreign Minister Taye Atske-Selassie (Amb.) reaffirmed Ethiopia's readiness to the preparatory conference for the 4th UN Conference on Financing for Development, which Ethiopia will host in July.

The above remark came here yesterday while FM Taye held talks with the UNECA Executive Secretary Claver Gatete on various issues of mutual concern.

The parties consulted on issues that need to be executed to make the conference a success.

FM Taye reportedly reaffirmed Ethiopia's steadfast commitment to host the conference in collaboration with the United Nations.

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News



Samuel Molalegne

Dessie carries out 1-bln- Birr worth projects

• To inaugurate 33 new projects

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

ADDIS ABABA- Dessie Mayor said that the construction of various projects is being carried out at a cost of over one billion Birr.

The Mayor Samuel Molalegne told the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that the inauguration of 33 projects will take place soon. The construction of various projects involving the government officials and the community are being underway in the city.

The construction of roads, bus terminals, offices, water, health, schools, substations among others which are said to center on the public's demand, is being carried out with the government budget and the public's contribution.

The Mayor also stated that the construction is being underway with 1,027,287,033 Birr that is obtained from the government budget and the public's contribution. "Out of the total budget, 941,287,033 Birr is the government budget and the remaining 87 million Birr is public contribution."

The 87million Birr that was gained from the public is allocated to the construction of schools, drugstores, and Mayor Office Building and road dividers. Accordingly, Some 25 million Birr spent on pharmacies, 30 million Birr allotted on the mayor's office, another 23 million Birr on road dividers, and nine million Birr on schools.

Emphasizing efforts that are being put toward making Dessie a smart city, Samuel noted that nine asphalt roads, 16 schools, two public bus terminals, one bakery and wheat factory, asphalt plant, the Mayor Office building, are among the finalized projects that are going to be inaugurated soon.

Moreover, through opening public pharmacies in all sub cities as well as organizing drug suppliers companies, the city has created an opportunity for the public to find drugs with affordable price. "The bakery and wheat factory was built by Office of the First Lady."

The city purchased asphalt plant, asphalt paver, loader, grader, excavator and other necessary equipment to answer the public's demand for infrastructural development. The asphalt plant not only allowed changing the colorful stones with asphalt road but also enabling neighboring cities to do so the same.

The Mayor urged the consorted efforts of all stakeholders to sustain the development activities in Dessie.

Axum experiences increasing tourist influx

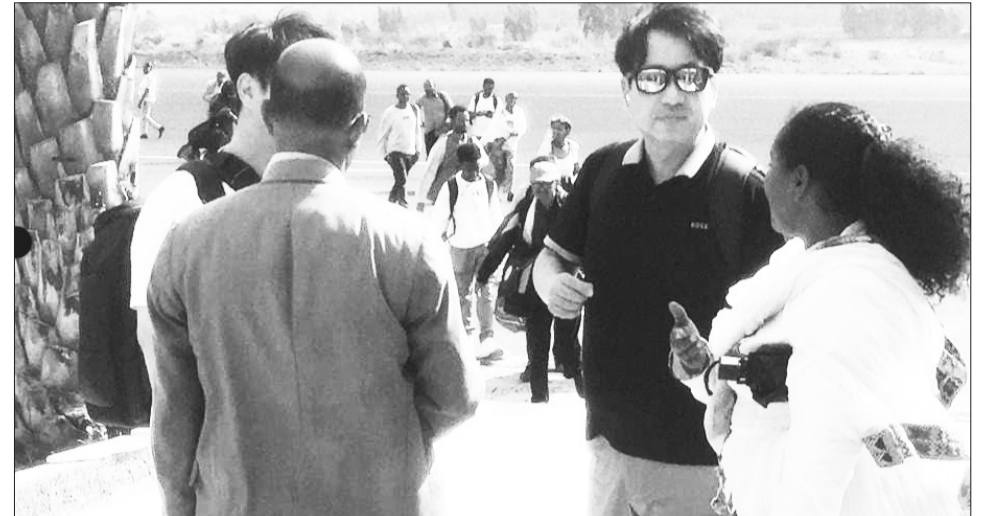
BY STAFF REPORTER

ADDIS ABABA – Ethiopia's historic city, Axum, is experiencing an increasing tourist flow on the heels of the resumption of flight that was interrupted for long due to the Tigray conflict, City's Tourism Bureau said.

While welcoming tourists from South Korea, Head of the Bureau, Gebremedhin Fitsumberhan, said that domestic and foreign tourists are flocking to Axum since the reopening of Emperor Yohannes IV Airport.

Gebremedhin highlighted the growing tourist numbers as a sign of peace returning to the region.

Axum's rich heritage, including ancient obelisks, artifacts and religious sites, makes it a compelling tourist destination, he said, adding that the Bureau is working to enhance visitor facilities to make the city even more welcoming.



"The contribution of ancient Axumites was great. The city has precious heritages, artifacts, religious and innovative relics which can attract tourists. Tourists are likely to spend longer time to visit all these attractions. The Bureau is improving conditions aiming to make the city home to tourists," he said.

He also extended invitation to tourists, assuring them of Axum's openness and hospitality. Emperor Yohannes IV Airport of Axum has been providing flight services again since the first day of this month. The flight was resumed in the presence of higher governmental officials, *The Ethiopian Herald* learnt.

MoH embraces private entities to ensure menstrual hygiene

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

ADDIS ABABA- Due emphasis has been given to involve private institutions and other actors to deliver quality menstrual hygiene services for women and girls, the Ministry of Health (MoH) said.

Tajebe Kumela, Public Health Protection Expert within the MoH made the above remark during the Menstrual Hygiene Day celebration hosted by AIDS Healthcare Foundation (AFH) and concerned institution at Tesfa Birhan High School.

The Menstrual Hygiene Day was marked for 8th time nationally and for 11th time internationally with the aim of creating awareness on menstruation hygiene for the public.

Speaking at the occasion, Tajebe mentioned that MoH takes menstrual hygiene as one of its priority areas and it has been implementing different projects in concert with the Ministry of Education and other stakeholders. Such partnership aims to enable institutions deliver quality service for girls with regard to menstrual hygiene products and facilities.

Multipurpose activities have also been underway to address the inaccessibility, awareness gap as well as supply challenges in different areas of the country.

The awareness raising activities not only focused sensitizing the society to end stigma and discrimination but to enhance its awareness. Thus, the awareness raising activity is now carried out in schools, women clubs, and women organizations.

"The government has cut import taxes on sanitary products from 30 percent to 10 percent," he said, adding that there is ongoing activity to remove taxes on imported menstrual hygiene items to make sanitary pads affordable.

Moreover, efforts geared towards encouraging local manufacturers of



menstrual hygiene products. AFH is one of the charity organizations that are doing meaningful activities in supporting women and girls across the country, Tajebe elaborated.

"Not only making sanitary pads accessible to women, but such organizations are enabling them to manufacture the products locally."

Alemtsehay Enyew from the Ministry of Education (MoE) stated that the inclusion of menstrual education in the curriculum plays a major role to encourage students at large. The MoE along with different ministries is working to install one wash facilities in schools across the nation.

She, however, highlighted the lack of adequate resource as the major constraint in implementing the facilities in the already existing schools. Absence of collaboration is also one of the challenges that draw efforts back from getting the desired outcome.

"Nonetheless, local and international organizations including AHF are executing various activities in supporting women and girls to get access to sanitary services which have significantly decreased school dropout and absenteeism."

Achieving equal distribution of sanitary services would not be a reality by public institutions alone, thus, the concerted efforts of stakeholders is highly needed to address

the crosscutting challenge that many girls and women have been facing face, she emphasized.

AHF Country Representative Mengistu G/ Michael (MD) on his part highlighted that the organization has been offering sanitary pads and trainings for female students of Tesfa Birhan High school.

While providing free comprehensive HIV care services to patients is the major objective of the foundation, it is providing support for over 17 public health centers' HIV program in the Capital.

The organization is also delivering similar support for different hospitals in Amhara, Oromia, and Sidama states and over 60,000 HIV AIDS patients have received free treatment, care and support under the three modalities this year.

Under its partnership and advocacy program, the foundation gives training for students from high school, college and universities to prevent them from HIV and STI infections, reduce unplanned pregnancies, and support them to stay in school under Girls Act and young people program (YPP).

AHF has donated sanitary pads for the boarding school build by the First Lady while offering Addis Ababa University equipment which help them manufacture reusable sanitary pad, the country representative remarked.

News

GIZ hails Ethiopia's energy strategy

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

ADDIS ABABA- The German Agency for International Cooperation has commended Ethiopia's commitment to achieve sustainable development through implementing a tailored energy strategy on renewable sources.

GIZ Ethiopian-German Energy Cooperation Project Manager Samson Tolessa expressed that the country's energy strategy that banned importing non-electric vehicles is a critical decision and timely.

The strategy showcased its comparative advantage for proper usage of Ethiopia's renewable energy, which is vital to ramp up sustainable economic development.

According to Samson, Ethiopia's banning of importing non-electric vehicles has become a major topic in different German media outlets.

He expressed the GIZ's readiness to provide capacity-building programs, particularly in enabling Ethiopia to access Germany's energy sector experiences.

"The main focus of the GIZ is building the energy sector capacity, especially in planning and execution, facilitating knowledge and technology transfer, establishing TVET centers and providing other services."

The organization has laid a foundation in various areas across the country mainly through energizing development projects.

For Samson, Germany has a benchmark for any country owing to its acclimated experience in the energy sector and involving private owners, utilizing the role of higher education institutions and research centers.

As a result, the GIZ is ready to support Ethiopia's knowledge and technology transfer, environment and natural resources protection, and other ambitions.

The organization has also been supporting policies, proclamations, strategies, and other practical measures Ethiopia has taken to promote wise use of energy.

The Project Manager further highlighted that in collaboration with the Petroleum and Energy Authority, GIZ has been working on outlining technical directives and building energy efficiency codes to facilitate energy transformation and capacity building as well as promoting indigenous knowledge and private sector involvement.

"Since the private sector is an engine of a given country's economy, we would focus on increasing its engagement in the sphere. It requires expanding grids, preparations, and utilizing population dividend or advantage."

He called on development partners to support Ethiopia's energy sector initiative and strengthen cooperation.

PSI promotes concerted intervention...

the Ministry of Urban and Infrastructure (MoUI), UN-Habitat, Addis Ababa University, Goh Betoch Bank, and the Association of Ethiopian Micro-finance Institutions held the first Ethiopian housing symposium yesterday under the theme "Building homes, empowering lives: Advancing inclusive housing for sustainable development."

In his opening remark, PSI Director General Prof. Beyene Petros said that stakeholder cooperation is vital and timely to address housing challenges in Ethiopia by applying an inclusive and affordable pricing approach.

As to him, Ethiopia is the 2nd most populated country in Africa and ranked 5th in the continent in terms of urbanization rates. However, he stated that 63% of the population yet sheltered in substandard housing.

Therefore, this symposium is a milestone to address housing challenges in Ethiopia through sharing knowledge and experience, identifying and bridging the policy gaps,



Beyene Petros (Prof.)

and encouraging partnership, Beyene indicated.

Habitat for Humanity Ethiopia National Director and Representative to AU, Yitna

Tekalegn on his part said that his institution benefited over 800,000 people by building houses, toilets, and the like in Ethiopia during the past three decades.

As to Yitna, the country has close to 4.5 million housing units, of which, 74% are substandard and 30% require replacement. Besides, 21.6% of the population lives in urban areas. The demand for housing is immense, with an estimated need for 471,000 new urban houses annually by 2025.

A paper presented on the occasion by Wubshet Berhanu (PhD), from Addis Ababa University, indicated that challenges related to policy, construction, market problems, lack of integrated data management system, and low household income are major factors in the housing sector in Ethiopia.

Wubshet also suggested that policy intervention in ensuring balanced urbanization, urban planning and implementation and complying with economic incentives between sectors are significant in tackling housing problems.

Ethio-China robust...

time to time. The government of Ethiopia will continue the partnership; this cooperation has always been grounded on principles of mutual benefit, respect and trust between the two Nations from the outset.

"Ethio-China business cooperation began in 1971 and reached the highest level now. Over the past two decades, the partnership has been progressing into a higher level, and upgraded to all-weather cooperation partnership since October 2023."

Over the past two decades, more than 70 medium and large-scale projects have been successfully implemented in Ethiopia; which among others two railways, nine roads, 35 power generation transmission lines, substations, six manufacturing factories, three water supply projects and modernization of the telecom sector, Semereta elaborated.

According to Semereta, railway projects are playing a crucial role in Ethiopia's rapid growth. In addition to railways, Ethiopia with the full support of the Chinese government, has accomplished many projects, which include expressways, airport terminals, manufacturing industries and others.

Over the past 53 years, the Chinese government has played an important role by providing over 20 million Yuan support and about 1.6 billion Yuan assistance in the form of grants.

She further highlighted that the trade relations between Ethiopia and China have been rising with consistent growth over time. The two countries exchanged over 16.8 billion USD from 2016 to 2022.

Some 93% of this amount constitutes exports from China to Ethiopia while the remaining seven percent is from Ethiopia to China.

"We are working to increase and grow as we go forward. To address the gap and make the trade partnership sustainable, the Chinese government is working on ways to allow Ethiopian products to enter into the country's market."

Industry State Minister Hassen Muhammed stated for his part that the Ethiopian government is committed to improving the ease of doing business for foreign investors. Business licensing, logistics and energy supply are major areas that the government is providing as incentives.

"Manufacturing industries are being supported in respective to the newly adopted policy that is aimed to create a sustainable and predictable industrial landscape," he remarked.

The Ethiopian Chamber of Commerce and Sectorial Association President Melaku Ezezew said on the occasion that Ethiopia's business environment is attracting foreign investors including Chinese businesses.

The government is addressing challenges related to customs and taxation, land access, finance and infrastructure, Melaku added.

Chinese Embassy Minister Consular for Economic and Commercial Affairs Yang Yihang also reaffirmed his country's desire to continue investing in Ethiopia. China is the leading foreign investor in Ethiopia and the undertakings have been creating a substantial number of jobs and facilitating industrialization.

Ethiopia reaffirms...

The preparatory conference, scheduled for July 2024, represents a crucial step in the lead-up to the 4th UN International Conference on Financing for Development. Ethiopia's commitment to successfully hosting this event underscores its continued engagement and leadership in the global development agenda.

The reaffirmation of Ethiopia's role in this important international conference reflects the country's growing stature and influence within the multilateral system. As a key partner of the UN, Ethiopia's ability to effectively organize and facilitate this preparatory meeting will be a testament to its diplomatic progress and logistical capabilities, it was stated.

Moreover, they discussed Africa's participation in the Summit of the Future to be held in New York next September.

There was also a consultation on the possibility of making Africa Hall a tourist attraction by linking its renovation work with the corridor development in Addis Ababa. Such linkage would put the historic hall a preferred tourist attraction sites in the metropolis.

According to information obtained from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the UNECA and Ethiopia have discussed the manner in which they can work together on development and international issues.

Opinion

Why easy things is suddenly becoming difficult

BY MEKONEN SOLOMON

More recently Ethiopian Flower Producers and exporters used to describe themselves as they are not Price Maker, rather they consider themselves as Price Taker in the global flower market dynamics. They claim that they have no control over the price in market and forced to accept what the market has given. In global market place, like flora Holland, there are large numbers of buyers and sellers who used to come from every corner of the world. Large numbers of European wholesalers, breeders and re-exporters, who have a patent of innovation, remote buying technology, value addition, logistical facility and enough marketing strategy have a big power to influence the price in the flower market and often considered as Price maker. Thus, the influence of a single country seller on the selling price is indeed minimal.

The implication what Ethiopian flower producers and exporters said are crystal clear. They have a feeling of trapped and becoming rapt in a state of affairs where they might not compete in global market unless some measure is taken toward fine-tuning of the existing legal minimum floor price set by National Bank Of Ethiopia. These contest were not been felt so long until Flora Holland, in July 4, 2024, formulate a new standard that oblige flower exporters to set their own minimum selling price or a price that they are willing to accept for their flowers product price by taking into account their production cost and overall strategy.

But there is counter argument that do not accept the claims of flower exporters. Many critiques argue that, there is under invoicing. The value of hard currency repatriated to the country is by far lower than the actual value received in global market. The actual selling price in auction and other market channel is either hidden or not shared by market players. Detailed record of flower exchange in market, including their quantity, varieties, stem length, thickness, color description, real time price information, and terms of sale and other evidence are not easily accessible to regulatory agency. Thus according to this arguments fine tuning of the existing minimum floor price set seems irrational

So far many efforts has been made to set minimum floor price more responsive to global market situation by analyzing both what the market offered to our flower exporters and what the National Bank of Ethiopia set. Nevertheless, the attempt has remained futile for various reasons. The first and the most important reason is the existence of two different standard unit of measurement of flower sales in market (price per stem and price per kg).

It is evident that in global market, the selling price of certain set of flower is often measured in terms of stems or price per stem. Fresh flower is commonly sold at the Dutch auction market and other retail channels in stem, in fact anywhere else in the world the sell is on basis of price per stem. The buyer, who is willing to buy flower in auction or other retail channel usually offer its price per stem. Even the Ethiopian flower producer and exporter who supply their product to auction received real time selling price information in terms of price per on stem on daily bases. That means the standard unit of measurement in global flower market is price per stems. In contrast the unit of measurement that are widely used for conceding of flower sale & determination of minimum selling price in Ethiopia is price per Kilo gram. Many industry players argue that the kilogram measurement mechanism comes in direct incongruity to the accepted instrument in the global market.

When the floriculture export business began in Ethiopia, there had not been any threshold floor price to system enacted to monitor and regulate foreign currency repatriations, it worked under good faith and honesty system, where the National Bank solely rely on the self declaration, invoice or contractual agreements. During this time there was not much noise on market price side, as the bank accepted whatever price taker or the flower exporter repatriated for the volume of flower exported and sold. However, many people were suspicious about the risk that the honesty system would expose the country to under-invoicing practice. Deliberate declaring a lower value for flower exported than their actual value was the concern of many.

It had been in April 16, 2007 that stem unit of flower measurement introduced in Ethiopia for the first time under National Bank Directive No FXD/32/2000. The directive state that flowers to be supplies to global market should be sold with minimum price set 0.1 USD/Stem. The Ethiopian Custom commission there by entitled to register the number of flower stems exported and report to Bank to control and manage the Repatriation of Foreign currency.

However the National Bank Directive that set Stem Standard unit of measurement or 0.1 USD/Stem had taken the sector to nowhere. Quite a number of Flower producers and exporters complained that the Ethiopian airport Custom inspection technique and technology was very poor to implement the directive. Opening of flower cartoon at check point and counting of stems number at cargo terminal was considered as regressive practice which spoiled the quality of flowers and its packaging materials. This situation made

the government regulatory and supporting institution to look after other alternative of setting threshold selling price. Overtime changing stem to kilogram unit of measurement is found to be the available alternative means during that time. However, changing stem unit as parameter for selling, in to kg was not found as an easy task.

It was on February 14 2012, the stem unit of measurement was changed to kg. By NBE (directive FXD/41/2012) and subsequently the price per kilogram is revised in April 1, 2022. Despite unit of kilogram regulation introduced in Ethiopia, those who activity involved in flower trading business argue that kilogram unit of measurement was neither familiar nor widely work in global flower marker practice. The motive of changing stem to Kg is thought by many as an excuses of implementing agency for their inefficiency to safely count, register and control number of stem exported and lack of capacity to closely survey, monitor and follow the global market price by themselves or by other credential third party like in Kenya. Despite Kenya do not have a system and practice of setting minimum floor price, for domestic tax and levy purpose they used to gain access to global flower selling price information (per stem) from International Credible data service Providers.

Today there is perceived limitation on kilogram unit of measurement for flower in Ethiopia. For instance in mid altitude cluster like Beshofu the average number of stem per kilogram of rose flower is roughly estimated to be 33 stems. The minimum price set for rose flower for this cluster is 4.334 USD per Kilogram which means 0.131 USD/Stem. But according to recent survey (DLV PLANTS) there are more than 8 different type of rose varieties that have different selling price in the market for stated cluster. If we take Mariyo and Sonrisa varieties that widely cultivated in this cluster, the average selling price of Mariyo in Auction in 2022 was found to be 0.248 per stem whereas for sunrise varieties it was 0.155 per stem. This indicates that, the selling price per stem of some varieties is by far greater than the cluster floor price average per stem. Despite its importance, the existing floor price regulation did not consider the price variation of same flower varieties in given cluster rather it consider only agro-ecology and the type of flower (Rose or summer flower that existed in given agro ecology)

The most tricky things is in one kilogram of rose flower in one cluster or agro ecology there existed different type varieties with range of different stem length and other characteristics that significantly influence market price. At the same time one

kilogram of rose contains different number of stems depending on varieties stem length, thickness and customer orders.

Unfortunately, our Minimum selling price formulation was not considering the inherent characteristics of this rose flower that contribute for variation of selling price per stem. Due to these reasons the probability of getting different selling price in market per kilogram of rose flower in one cluster and even with in individual company shipment is very high.

Some critiques argued that it is more advantageous for the country to set a minimum selling price per stem than setting threshold level in kg. This is because of the flowing reasons. 1st Since the global market is exchange is in terms of stem there is a good opportunities to raise or lower the floor selling price of flower based on the observed actual market situation both to increase foreign currency repatriation and to protect our exporters from sudden price shock. 2nd The room for under invoicing is minimal as there would be digital market plat form that provide required market price information for of different type of flowers varieties through online system. 3rd our flower export performance can easily compared with our competitors as we adopt the same unit of stem standard measurement. 4th there is adequate room to benefit from high value varieties of flower which otherwise could not be realized under kg unit of measurements.

The conclusion is that kilogram standard unit of measurement is not the feasible means of regulating minimum threshold price and ensuring adequate repatriation of foreign currency earning. Kilogram standard unit of measurement is also not a convenient means of overcoming malpractice that emanate from under invoicing. The only solution to way out from this unfamiliar practice and uncertainty of under invoicing thus seems three: First introducing an innovate technology that easily count stems of flowers at custom check-point in Ethiopian Cargo wing which enables the regulatory agency to determine the actual volume of flower exported. Second accessing digital flower market and price information of each flower varieties by own means or through third party to control and manage the foreign currency repatriation. Third clearly identifying the flower type that has different market price with clear criterion like varieties, color, stem length, stem thickness, bud size, leaf index

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

Editorial

Ethiopia's membership in BRICS highlights its sustainable influence

Last year, Ethiopia became among the five nations that were admitted to the BRICS alliance. The nation's staggering influence in regional, continental and global stages has played into its selection to the growing bloc.

Ethiopia's increasing might in geopolitics is emboldening nations across all hemispheres to work with the country. This is giving the nation a long list of alternatives in its foreign relations. As said time and time again, joining the BRICS alliance brings lofty dividends not only to the nation but also to the bloc. Apart from striking a balance in the international system, the expansion of alternative international cooperation fosters trade.

From up scaling its political leverage to increasing its decision-making capability on global stages, BRICS admission will also boost Ethiopia's diplomatic clout. Alliances like BRICS also help counter unfair world order and pave the way for a more inclusive and fair international system. Over the years, there have been repeated calls to reform the existing international system. Particularly, the global south has been calling for Security Council reforms and changes in international financial institutions. Criticized as being the weapon of their financiers intentional financial institutions are seen mainly as unfair to borrowing nations.

Since joining the alliance, Ethiopia has been taking an active role. Besides elevating ties with the member countries at bilateral and multilateral levels, Ethiopia is now an active member.

Ethiopia's active participation in the BRICS meeting has begun yielding significant diplomatic achievements. Successfully represented in its ongoing meeting and conference, Ethiopia is injecting new blood into the alliance. Surely, Ethiopia's membership has mutual benefits as the country remains the epicentre of African diplomacy and continues to be the main stabilizer worn the torn region.

Having a great share of the global population with a big slice of the international economy, the bloc could also serve as an alternative source of finance. Recently, the founding members of the BRICS economic bloc have pledged support for Ethiopia to achieve membership in the New Development Bank (NDB).

A high-level Ethiopian delegation led by Foreign Minister Taye Atske Selassie participated at the BRICS Foreign Ministers' Forum. MoFA Spokesperson Nebiyu Tedla (Amb.) told journalists on Thursday that the founding members of BRICS, including Russia, China, and Brazil, have committed to supporting Ethiopia's bid for NDB membership.

"BRICS members will support Ethiopia's and other new entrant's aspiration to join the New Development Bank, as stated during the joint announcement following the summit's conclusion."

He also highlighted that the joint announcement directed Ethiopia and other new BRICS member states to receive support to join the NDB based on their financial capabilities.

Foreign Minister Taye reportedly emphasized Ethiopia's aspiration within the BRICS framework during the summit. "The ongoing geopolitical tensions among superpowers are affecting developing countries. Ethiopia believes in the need for a genuine global partnership. In this regard, the Foreign Minister urged BRICS members to craft constructive mechanisms to navigate these geopolitical challenges," Nebiyu elaborated.

On the occasion, BRICS Foreign Ministers included Ethiopia's perspectives, advocating for seamless integration of Ethiopia and other new members into BRICS and the New Development Bank. The move can be taken as the first perk and will surely pave the way for an economically integrated world and will help redefine the existing unfair global arrangements. Surely, this is only the tip of the iceberg. With new members added, BRICS will become an economic powerhouse and giant alliance. And, this shall serve as a red flag for the West to redefine its relation with African nations and come up with a more inclusive and fair international system.



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Opinion

Interconnectivity between Green Legacy Initiative, YelematTrufat, food security and agro-industry in Ethiopia

BY SOLOMON DIBABA

A number of reformative development programs initiated by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed are in operation in Ethiopia. The main purpose of this contribution is to make an analytical preview of the necessary dialectical and operation link between the three programs and their implication for the industrial development and upscaling of foreign trade revenue for the country.

From the outset, it must be clear that the three projects are not standalone in terms of their output and contribution to the country's socioeconomic development.

Ethiopia's initiatives like YelematTrufat, the Green Legacy Initiative, and comprehensive food security strategies are integral components of the country's sustainable development goals.

YelematTrufat also sometimes known as Basket Bounty is Ethiopia's comprehensive plan to boost agricultural productivity and promote economic self-sufficiency. Key aspects include:

Modern Farming Techniques: Adoption of advanced agricultural methods to increase crop yields. use of high-yield and drought-resistant seeds to enhance food production, expansion of irrigation infrastructure to mitigate the impacts of erratic rainfall and droughts, encouraging value addition and market access for agricultural products to improve farmers' incomes.

These measures aim to transform Ethiopia's agriculture sector, making it more resilient and productive, thereby contributing to food security.

Launched in 2019 by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, the Green Legacy Initiative aims to combat environmental degradation and promote sustainable development through planting billions of trees across the country to restore forests, improve soil fertility, and enhance water retention.

Rehabilitating degraded landscapes to improve biodiversity and ecological balance, enhancing the country's capacity to withstand the adverse effects of climate change, such as droughts and floods.

By improving the environment, the Green Legacy Initiative supports sustainable agriculture, which is essential for long-term food security.

Food security in Ethiopia is a multifaceted issue addressed through various policies and programs aimed at ensuring that all citizens have access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food. Key strategies include: Investing in agricultural research, infrastructure, and extension services to boost food production, implementing programs to address malnutrition and promote healthy diets,

especially among vulnerable populations, developing systems to mitigate the impacts of natural disasters on food production and distribution.

Both YelematTrufat and the Green Legacy Initiative contribute to environmental sustainability, which is crucial for reliable agricultural production. Healthy ecosystems support fertile soils, adequate water supply, and a stable climate, all of which are essential for food security. By improving agricultural productivity and promoting agribusiness, YelematTrufat enhances economic opportunities for rural populations. This, in turn, supports food security by increasing household incomes and reducing poverty. The Green Legacy Initiative's focus on tree planting and ecosystem restoration helps build resilience against climate shocks, such as droughts and floods, ensuring more stable agricultural output and food availability.

The synergy between YelematTrufat, the Green Legacy Initiative, and food security policies highlights a holistic approach to sustainable development in Ethiopia. By addressing environmental, economic, and social dimensions, these initiatives collectively work towards achieving a food-secure and resilient nation.

The author wishes to take the analysis on the three development programs much further. YelematTrufat which encompasses, bee keeping, horticulture, meat production, poultry, and dairy products like milk has a greater bearing particularly in preventing various diseases related to nutritional deficiencies particularly among children, lactating mothers and the elderly. This means that the program renders greater contribution to the promotion of public health.

As stated above, the program on YelematTrufat promotes environmental protection and production of marketable agricultural products with better quality for local consumption and export. Besides, industries in the country can use the program as sources of inputs to produce quality value added products that can compete on global markets. The program will allow millions of youth to be self-employed and shape a better future for themselves. One of the merits of this program emanates from the fact that it can be operated both at the household level and at communities.

Apart from the government, CSOs in the country can help in boosting this program by providing need based trainings both at rural settings and urban centers of the country YelematTrufat should also be organized in such a way that it could be supportive to the National Green Legacy Initiative as mentioned above.

On the other hand, the National Green

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

Art & Culture



Addis' recreational options luring residents to pour out into its new, shimmering streets

BY NAOL GIRMA

Addis Ababa's working class, youths, and people from other works of life have long been tacitly denied the pleasure of recreation. For years, recreations were considered a luxury for the fair reason that the few recreational facilities in the city required exorbitant payments. Most of the inhabitants could not afford to indulge in costly recreations.

"There were not many things that I used to do for pleasure. Most of my friends and I used to spend our spare time in bars gulping down beers at the cost of harm to our health and pockets not to mention the squandering away of precious time for those who know the value of time. In so doing, barefacedly selfish we were oblivious to our house members. Boozing was the only recreation we indulged in when we were not working", says Eyob Keno a young resident. According to him, for want of recreational facilities that accommodate the interests of all, the idea of healthy recreation had been eclipsed by bad habits for many years and the repercussions are still affecting the community, particularly the youth.

He adds that people with low incomes and averse to consuming alcohol did not have much opportunity to engage in healthy recreations. As a result, they would just remain in their homes doing nothing for pleasure or they would be exposed to bad habits such as chewing Chat, drinking alcohol, and smoking cigarettes.

Some months back, innumerable brothels at the heart of Addis had been ruining generations for many years. Places of drug abuse, commercial sex work, and other illegal activities have been spiraling out of control like a wildfire. There were even places where people had to look over their shoulders for fear. These places used to exist at the heart of Addis Ababa in specific neighborhoods called Paisa and Arat Kilo. There were squalid and slam neighborhoods

called Doro Manekia and Erri Bekentu, about what is happening behind the curtain one could find hard to imagine, let alone thinking a proper recreation. Leaving a decent life was highly subject to doubt.

This situation was crying for a turnaround. It reached the heeding ears of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's administration, which came up with ambitious development project plans. It got on the ball of a rapid execution with the leadership of a task force, which was comprised of officials of the City Administration. The prominent figure in this stride is the City Mayor Adanech Abiebie, marked for unflaggingly walking her talk. Explaining how the government came up with the idea of the projects, she said there were developments in the city here and there and they were not aligned or streamlined. "Therefore, the City Corridor Development Project plan was studied, and we started the implementation right away."

It has been repeatedly explained by the officials that the corridor development project was expected to include multifaceted facilities such as wide asphalts and pedestrian roads, bicycle lines, parking lots, green areas, cafeterias, fountains and beautiful public spaces. Thus, those shanty places around Piasa and Arat Kilo were demolished, and eye-catching sights began to emerge to the extent one wondered "why we fail to do that for long?" "Why such a turnaround was tardy in coming". The corridor development project is still underway, but much has been done in a short period. The task force and all actors involved in the project have continued their hard work as they also enjoyed the refreshing fruits of their round-the-clock engagement.

This new face of the City on the other hand has enabled residents from different walks of life to engage in indifferent healthy recreations. Ever since the corridor around Arat kilo has been opens to the public so many Addis residents have been witnessed strolling on the streets enjoying

themselves. They are seen pausing to have their shots taken with the new face of Addis as a background. Many couples, families, friends, etc. are spending their night times in these areas and doing things for pleasure.

Eyob currently enjoys walking on the streets with his friends. "I hope many young people will embrace using the new facilities built on the corridors", he says.

According to Ferew Admasu, another public servant, whom The Ethiopian Herald approached, when the corridor development sees full completion, it no doubt will revolutionize the culture of recreation in the community. "We are seeing so many people jogging, running, walking, and the like. I am one of those who love walking and enjoying the fresh air of the night. Previously, I dared not to go out of my house for everything was congested and there was not enough space on the streets. A couch potato, I would rather sit at home and bore myself watching some foreign movie episodes. Now the main streets around Arat Kilo are reconstructed with new standards, the dilapidated buildings are renovated, and I am enjoying myself walking", he said.

From parts of the city that have been transformed from a slum into some kind of heavenly beauty is found Eri Bekentu. The name itself conjures up a fearsome image in one's mind as it meant a clamor for help would go unnoticed in that particular place.

Yimegnushal Tadese is the head of Urban Beautification and Green Development Bureau of the City Administration. She explained the former Eri Bekentu as a place where there were so many unpleasant things going on and a question mark was hanging over peoples' safety.

"Now this reality has been changed completely by the corridor development project and the place is attractive and recreational. About 2,750 kilometers of land have been utilized for the corridor development in the area", she noted.

If the glamour of the corridor development project lures people out of their homes and start practicing new and healthy recreation cultures, there is no doubt more development works in the pipeline of the city will certainly change the lifestyles of the people. On a recent visit to the completed parts of the project Mayor Adanech Abiebie, with the premier and other officials, said the residents of the city have been cooperative and helpful throughout the process.

"The public has been attentive to Addis' transformation for the better. People are giving us feedback about the project freely. We have seen so many people enjoying themselves on the completed parts of the corridor including the Adwa memorial. The support and applause when they saw the premier, during the visit, was overwhelming. It will make us go lower and work harder. We are basking under great appreciation, and we are gaining political affinity by the day. The more we get closer to our public, the more we support one another, the more focus we can place on vital issues of concern, and the better everybody's lifestyles.", said Adanech.

She also indicated that, with the increasing support of the public more life-changing development projects will be launched in the future and the image of Addis Ababa will experience upturn everywhere to the delight of the majority. "Acknowledgement is due to residents of Addis Ababa for their full support. If the public understands the significance of what we are doing this much, it will lend us the impetus to throw our full weight behind beautifying Addis and making it more habitable. This is just the beginning. I would like to promise the residents of Addis Ababa that we will scale up this good start manifold in many places throughout the city", she stressed.

If such motives are realized and many shanty places evolve into modern city allurements, more people may engage in more healthy recreational activities and as the Mayor pledged residents' lives will be rosy.

Law & Politics

Dialogue-the only wise option for all

BY SOLOMON WASSIHUN

Ethiopia is a land of contrasts in almost every respect. Some are funny, and others are serious. The current Ethiopian Premier is one of the youngest leaders in Africa. However, the head of a provisional commission, who is the chief architect of a key political project in the country and whose actions are eagerly followed by 120 million Ethiopians, is a septuagenarian. There are also serious contrasts among the narratives of Ethiopia's past, present, and future, which have led to tensions and conflicts that threaten the nation's peace and huge potential for prosperity.

The two words that Ethiopians currently reiterate most often are peace and stability. However, ensuring peace for the people and stability of the political system is a daunting task that cannot rest on the shoulders of the government alone. It requires the full commitment to peace of the rival political forces, civil society, academics and the general public represented by various social groups.

A favourable climate must therefore be created in which the government can share the collective responsibility for securing peace and stability with the above-mentioned actors. To achieve this, a broad consensus on fundamental national issues among these actors is essential.

The only viable and sustainable option for achieving this common and fundamental understanding is not the imposition of the will of the powerful, but dialogue conducted with an open mind and willingness to compromise, and the acceptance of change in the interest of peace and stability of the nation, regardless of party lines and potential side effects on personal and group interests.

The recent progress made by the Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission (ENDC) in its efforts to organize the first-ever national dialogue in the country's political history is commendable. This progress has raised optimism among Ethiopians, both at home and abroad, for the return of lasting peace and stability in their nation.

In addition to the impressive progress made by ENDC, there are other reasons for the optimism unfolding in the country's political landscape. The transitional justice policies have been promulgated and are set to be implemented soon. Furthermore, a new law has provided opportunities for outlawed political parties and those who have resorted to violence to participate in a legitimate and nonviolent political struggle.

The majority of Ethiopians have a strong sense of optimism about Ethiopia's political and economic future, and this sentiment is also shared by foreign analysts, international institutions, and think tanks. Even those who focus solely on economic forecasts implicitly acknowledge the positive political outlook, as economic progress is often contingent on an improved

As the work of ENDC progresses and approaches its climax, the consultation phase on the selected agenda, and as the governments keep on taking more reconciliatory measures in the interest of peace, it is expected that more and more political parties will join the bandwagon of the national dialogue that rolls on the road heading toward sustainable peace and prosperity

political situation.

Looking at the process of the national dialogue, in particular, ordinary citizens and scholars alike, share solid confidence in the ENDC in bringing the desired outcome from the process before the commission finishes its legal term which ends in February 2025, in less than eight months.

The strong public confidence in the ENDC appears to stem from at least four points. The first thing is the commission is acting independently without the unsolicited contact /involvement of government authorities and institutions. Secondly, it is being led by commissioners well-seasoned in both education and experience.

The chief commissioner, for instance, is not just a professor of Psychiatry. He has done internationally published extensive research in Social and Political Philosophy, Ethics, and Conflict Resolution. These people are believed to be less likely to bow to authorities' pressures or be swayed by material benefits to compromise their integrity and public trust.

Third, the national dialogue is planned in meticulously researched policies and procedures that take into account both the successful and failed national dialogue processes held in various countries. As they say, a durable house is one with a carefully made foundation. The ENDC has taken an extended time for the preliminary stages that took a better part of its three-year term stated in its founding proclamation.

The fourth point is, that the time-tested, unique, and rich indigenous knowledge and practices of negotiation of elders of various tribes and communities are additional inputs that fuel ENDC's ambition to achieve its ultimate objective. As most Ethiopians are conservative and have a deep attachment to their traditional values, it would not be surprising to see that ENDC attached vital importance to using traditional values.

As stated in its founding proclamation, Proclamation No.1265/2021, one of the guiding principles of the ENDC is using national traditional knowledge and values.

The fifth point is, while maintaining its legal personality as an independent and impartial entity free from the influence of the government and any other power, The ENDC enjoys full cooperation from the government both at federal and regional levels in getting positive responses for its administrative and logistical cooperation support requests for its efforts for a successful national dialogue process.

Speaking of the relationship between the government and ENDC, there is one point that should be worth noting. The English version of the ENDC proclamation -No.1265/2021 appears to be erroneous since it fails to express the unequivocal independence of ENDC from any organ of the government. Article 4/1 of part two of the proclamation reads: "The Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission, an impartial and independent organ of the Federal Government with its legal

personality, has been at this moment established by this proclamation." However, the Amharic version clearly states that ENDC is free from the influence of any organ of the government. Even, the word 'Federal' is not present in the Amharic version. By default, it is the Amharic version that overrides the English version.

The part of the speech the ENDC Chief made at the opening ceremony of the agenda-gathering phase, which got little media attention was the commission's plan to forward more important support requests to the government in the near future.- possibly actions that would be considered as a gesture of peace like the release of prisoners suspected of committing various criminal activities undermining the peace and stability of the state. Such actions would undoubtedly encourage the rival political forces that are currently keeping themselves aloof from the table of the national dialogue.

The national dialogue that is about to be held shortly is undoubtedly a historical event in Ethiopian politics that would set a milestone and bring fundamental positive change to the nation's political system, paving grounds for sustainable peace and stability in the nation. Without setting preconditions, without the ifs and buts, all political entities should seize this historical opportunity to be part of the process that would shape the nation's future.

In a recent speech he made recently one of the commissioners of ENDC, Ambassador Mohammed Drir described the national dialogue as pivotal for the nation saying "It is time to have a genuine dialogue that would not leave any social group, political group, armed group, and other actors outside."

As the work of ENDC progresses and approaches its climax, the consultation phase on the selected agenda, and as the governments keep on taking more reconciliatory measures in the interest of peace, it is expected that more and more political parties will join the bandwagon of the national dialogue that rolls on the road heading toward sustainable peace and prosperity.

Many analysts agree that political actors sooner or later would realize that none of them would achieve their political objectives by resorting to violence. They will soon realize that dialogue is the only wise option and engaging in violence would only bring the suffering and loss of life and livelihood of the people they say, they are fighting for.

Overall, if the current national dialogue process continues at its current pace, maintains the support of all stakeholders, and takes all necessary steps to ensure inclusivity, it will certainly achieve its ultimate goal of establishing national consensus and the reinforcement of the foundation of the Ethiopian state. Thus it would transform the current challenging and bleak political atmosphere into a positive one.



Ethiopia is an emerging player in the critical minerals market

Dr. Marit Yayehyirad (Ph.D.)

BY ZEKARIAS WOLDEMARIAM

As the world becomes increasingly entangled with the issue of climate change, the global de-carbonization agenda has become a high priority. At the heart of the de-carbonization agenda is the contribution Africa would make through its vast mineral resources, especially lithium, tantalum, and more. Along with increasing the level of mineral exploration in the continent by at least 6 times, ensuring the safety and benefits of the continent and its population is equally important. Efforts need to be made to put proper policy tools and commitment in place to ensure that the continent maximizes its mineral resources without compromising environmental safety and ensuring the long-term sustainability of its economic development.

The African Mineral Development Center (AMDC) is an organ of the African Union (AU) responsible for coordinating and overseeing the implementation of the Africa Mining Vision and its Action Plan (currently being revised). This is to enable the mineral resource sector to play a role in the social and economic transformation, inclusive growth, and sustainable development of African economies, in collaboration with Member States, Regional Economic Communities (RECs), the private sector, civil society organizations (including women and youth organizations), collaborating institutions, and other key stakeholders. Today's guest on The Ethiopian Herald is Dr. Marit Yayehyirad Kitaw, the interim director of AMDC.

Dr. Marit is an experienced economist specializing in natural resources for economic transformation and sustainable development in Africa, with extensive experience working on minerals for sustainable development. She is skilled in policy and technical advisory services, minerals, international development, and program management. Dr. Marit holds a Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) focused on Economics from Université Nice Sophia Antipolis.

The Ethiopian Herald interviewed Dr. Marit about Africa's role in the global de-carbonization agenda and how the center is assisting member states in formulating suitable policy frameworks for the proper utilization of the continent's mineral resources. Enjoy reading!



Could you please explain to me why Africa is mostly associated with mineral development, even after 60 years of independence? The main focus has been on unlocking Africa's potential through minerals. Can you shed some light on this?

Yes, in Africa, we hold 30% of the global mineral reserves. The reason minerals are currently at the forefront is due to the de-carbonization agenda. With the energy transition that the world requires, there is a need for 6 times more exploration and exploitation to bridge the gap. This de-carbonization agenda specifically requires critical minerals, also known as green minerals, which are essential for technologies like solar panels, battery storage, and wind turbines. Many of these minerals are found in Africa - for example, 70% of cobalt is

found in the DRC, lithium in Zimbabwe, and others in Ethiopia. Ethiopia is an emerging player in the critical minerals market, with untapped potential in gold, potash, tantalum, and more. There is a significant need for exploration in Ethiopia to fully utilize these resources.

The interest in these minerals has grown due to the increasing demand for lithium, graphite, cobalt, and manganese in southern Africa for battery production, particularly for electric vehicles. We also emphasize value addition, such as in the gemstone industry in Ethiopia, where gemstones are transformed into jewelry, involving women in small-scale mining. Our main goal at the AMDC is to ensure that African countries benefit from their mineral wealth, as historically, mining has not significantly improved the lives of the people. We have

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concrete strategies in place, such as the African Green Mineral Strategy and the Africa Mining Vision, to ensure that these resources are utilized effectively.

We work closely with countries in regions like southern Africa and Eastern Africa to implement these strategies, as often good policies and frameworks are in place but not effectively implemented. By collaborating with regional bodies like the East Africa Community and IGAD, we aim to create a larger market and ensure that African countries work together to transform the lives of their people through mineral resources.

As you mentioned, the world needs to explore six times more than the current level. To what extent is Africa prepared for this significant increase in demand for exploration?

That is an excellent question, and that is precisely why we are here to advise countries on how ready they need to be compared to others who are already well-prepared. They have plans in place for acquiring and supplying raw materials, among other things. The main goal of our Center is to ensure that countries are adequately prepared with the right policies, strategies, and negotiation skills, as mining companies often possess more knowledge and information than the countries they

operate in. We assist in negotiating contracts to ensure fairness and readiness.

There is an information asymmetry between these companies and the countries they operate in, so we aim to bridge that gap. It is crucial for countries to have strong institutions, transparency, and good governance, rather than solely relying on leadership changes. Focus should also be placed on acquiring the necessary skills, technology, and policies. Our focus is on making African countries ready for these challenges.

As a stakeholder, what is AMDC doing to close the gaps in technical and policy-related matters?

At the African Development Center, we conduct assessments. We have the African Minerals Governance Framework to evaluate their policies, strategies, implementation, value chain, and linkages. We examine how they allocate revenue from the mineral sector, focusing on whether they reinvest in productive sectors or not. This is crucial to prevent illicit financial flows. We provide technical assistance and support, leveraging our partnerships with organizations like the African Development Bank and ECA. By pooling our resources and expertise, we work towards our common goal of advancing Africa's mineral development. This collaboration extends to other jurisdictions that align with our strategy, ensuring clarity and progress in our efforts.

How can you participate in our system or at your Center?

First of all, we need to have the statutes of the African Mines Development Center ratified. Currently, we only have four ratifications, but we need 15 for it to become effective and operationalized. Unfortunately, Ethiopia is not one of the countries that has ratified it yet. Therefore, we are making an appeal for more ratifications. Once you ratify and give us the mandate, we will have the sustainability we need. Currently, we rely heavily on other donors to advance our agenda, which is not sustainable in the long run, despite having a strategy in place.

We need African countries to ratify our statute so that we can provide further assistance. We have tools like the African mining governance framework that we use to assess and provide technical assistance and support. We offer training, skills development, and other implementation tools to enhance countries and ensure they are part of the value chain. It's not just the Ministry of Mines involved, but also the Ministry of Industry, the environment, and gender considerations. We take a holistic approach to the value chain perspective.

Even without full ratification, we sometimes proceed when we see demand. We are also involved in the gemstone value chain, as mentioned by the association. Due to our connections in artisanal scale mining, we work extensively in this area, including in Ethiopia. We focus on the value chain of gemstone jewelry to add value. Exporting raw gemstones brings minimal profit, but when processed and sold in places like Dubai, the profits increase significantly. We aim to address these issues, especially for the miners who may not have access to sophisticated equipment.

Proper utilization of mineral resource in Africa is a very important issue along with other related matters. These kinds of things need to be regulated. In what way does your Center assist governments?

This is why we were created, because of the so-called resource curse. Resources are not a curse on their own, it is how they are governed, or the governance system. The policy looks at the whole value chain, not just exporting raw materials and exporting everything without any revenue coming back. Our main reason for existence is to avoid the resource curse. In the 15 years of the African Mining Vision, most countries, like the top 20 producing countries, have had reforms somewhat aligned with the principles of the AMDC. However, we still don't see transformed lives, except for examples like Botswana and Namibia. Some countries have ensured that they have benefited the people, but most are not where we want them to be. That's why we are pushing with our strategies and working with countries and regions to implement those strategies to avoid the resource curse.

Are mineral resources finite or renewable? What is the way forward for the future of Africa after exploiting all these resources?

That's a very good question. Circular economy is important. If we don't make use of them now, they won't be available for the future. We advocate for a Wells fund for the next generation and circularity. For example, if you have an abundant mine, you can use it for 20 years and then rebuild it to add value. Mining essentially moves the Earth, so it needs to be returned. We advocate for mine closure parks and circularity. Western countries assist with recycling, but we need more focus on value addition to create prosperity for the people. Green industrialization is important, focusing on using water efficiently and reducing CO2 emissions. It needs to be done collectively in a circular economy.

Thank you

It is my pleasure

Society

Harnessing digital tech to empower youths

BY TEWODROS KASSA

In today's fast-paced, digital world, with the rise of technology and social media, young people have more opportunities than ever to connect, learn, and grow. By allowing access to education, enhancing their learning skills and problem solving capacity, easing access to information around the world, as well as facilitating social connection on a global scale, digital technology is supporting and altering the lives of young people in various ways.

Owing to this and other important reasons, investing in digital technology and developing the knowledge and skills of the young people in digital literacy is becoming more imperative than before for countries to go along with the ever changing world and help young people to gain an edge in every aspect, including in the job market.

Obviously, digital literacy goes beyond knowing how to use a computer or smartphone; it includes the ability to navigate online platforms, evaluate information critically, and communicate effectively in a digital environment. By teaching youth these skills, digital platforms empower them to succeed in the modern world.

Currently, one of the most significant benefits of digital platforms for youth empowerment is the easy access to information and education. Through platforms like online courses, educational videos, and e-books, young people can learn about a wide range of topics from the comfort of their homes. This accessibility breaks down barriers to education and allows youth from all backgrounds to expand their knowledge and skills.

In today's digital age, young people have a powerful voice that can reach a global audience in seconds. Through social media platforms, blogs, podcasts, and online videos, youth can share their thoughts, ideas, and experiences with the world. This ability, to express themselves, empowers youth to advocate for change, raise awareness about important issues, and inspire others to take action.

Therefore, digital platforms provide young people with the opportunity to connect with like-minded individuals around the world. Whether through social media, online forums, or networking sites, youth can build valuable relationships and communities that support their personal and professional growth. These connections can lead to mentorship opportunities, collaborations, and even job offers, enhancing the overall empowerment of youth. As technology continues to advance, digital skills are becoming increasingly valuable in the job market. By engaging with digital platforms, youth can develop essential skills such as coding, graphic design, social media marketing, and online communication. These skills not only enhance their employability but also prepare them for the future workforce, where digital literacy is a must.

With this same intention, recently, the Ministry of Women and Social Affairs in partnership with UNICEF launched U-Report, UNICEF's digital engagement platform for adolescents and young people.



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The platform was officially launched in the presence of the Women and Social Affairs Minister Ergoge Tesfaye (PhD), UNICEF Ethiopia Representative Aboubacar Kampo (MD), along with senior government officials, donor community, civil society organizations, youth, and several UN agencies.

"The launch of U-Report in Ethiopia is not just a technological advancement; it is a testament to our commitment to empowering our young people and giving them a voice in the decisions that shape their future," said Women and Social Affairs Minister Ergoge Tesfaye (PhD).

According to the Minister, launching the app is a bold step forward in fostering a culture of civic engagement, where young citizens are not merely bystanders, but active agents of change.

"Young people have a great potential for fostering positive development and progress within any society. U-Report gives youth a platform to express their most pressing issues as well as opportunities to learn and collaborate with one another," said Dr. Aboubacar Kampo (MD), UNICEF Representative in Ethiopia.

Driven by their real-time insights and solutions, U-Report has become a powerful tool for youth that is helping to shape policies and decisions in communities, globally receiving an average of 2.4 million responses per month. U-Report empowers young people to find out about issues that affect them, act, and become part of the change they want to see.

In addition, the platform has significantly contributed to health information dissemination and awareness creation, especially during disease outbreaks. For example, in Zambia, voluntary HIV testing rates increased from 24 percent to 40 percent due to U-Report's influence. Youth voices are increasingly being heard, influencing institutional actions, and contributing to active youth engagement, it was learnt.

U-Report is available via numerous social media, Telegram, WhatsApp, and FB messenger having two main functions: collecting adolescent and youth opinions via polls and communicating information to support their well-being and skills development.

Globally, U-Report is partnering with over 35 million U-Reporters in 99 countries worldwide. The platform is available in different languages in Ethiopia – Amharic, Oromiffa, Somali, and Tigrinya and young people can become U-Reporters by sending a message directly via U-Report Global in Facebook or via the Telegram bot (https://t.me/ureportethiopia_bot) or the website (<https://ethiopia.ureport.in/>).

It is learned that U-Report aims to engage young people in shaping policies and decisions at all levels. It is stated that registered users can receive critical information, interact with engaging chatbots, and contribute to creating a better world for everyone.

Globally, U-Report is partnering with more than 35 million U-Reporters in 99 countries worldwide.

Launched in Uganda in 2011 for the first time, U-Report app has since expanded to over 90 countries and 35 million users globally. The platform enables adolescents and youth to speak out on the issues that concern them and receive useful life-saving information. Over the past 13 years, the app has been able to scale up and make a difference thanks to the support of governments, partners, and UNICEF offices that have amplified youth voices and made participation through U-Report engaging and accessible for all, with special focus on the most marginalized.

In sum, digital platforms play a vital role in empowering today's youth by providing access to information and education, building networks and communities, amplifying youth voice, and developing essential digital skills. By harnessing the power of technology, young people can unleash their full potential and become leaders in the digital age.

Interconnectivity between Green...

Legacy conducted every year by planting billions of trees could be linked up to YelematTrufat campaign by developing food forests in the form of planting fruit trees with multi-purpose objectives. In addition, retention of moisture in the soil, protecting huge expanse of land from all types of erosion will help to markedly reduce loss of top soil lost every year through recurrent runoff caused by rains across the country.

The Green Legacy Initiative in Ethiopia, launched in 2019, aims to combat environmental degradation and promote sustainable development by planting billions of trees. This initiative provides several significant economic benefits for the country:

Tree planting helps restore and maintain soil fertility by preventing soil erosion, enhancing organic matter content, and improving water retention. This leads to increased agricultural yields and food security.

Trees contribute to stabilizing local climates and protecting crops from extreme weather conditions. This results in more reliable agricultural output and reduces the risk of crop failures.

The initiative generates employment opportunities for millions of Ethiopians involved in tree planting and maintenance activities.

Improved environmental conditions foster the growth of agribusinesses and value-added agricultural activities, creating further employment and entrepreneurial opportunities.

Trees play a crucial role in watershed management by regulating water cycles, reducing runoff, and promoting groundwater recharge. This ensures a more consistent water supply for agricultural, industrial, and domestic use.

Improved water availability supports irrigation projects, which are vital for increasing agricultural productivity in arid and semi-arid regions.

Reforestation efforts enhance biodiversity and create attractive natural landscapes, which can boost ecotourism. This provides economic benefits through increased tourism revenue and the development of related services such as hospitality and guided tours.

The creation and expansion of protected areas for conservation can draw international tourists, contributing to foreign exchange earnings and local economic development.

By sequestering carbon dioxide, reforestation projects can generate carbon credits that Ethiopia can trade in international carbon markets, providing a new source of revenue. Participation in global climate initiatives can attract international funding and investment aimed at supporting sustainable environmental practices.

Reforested areas can sustainably provide raw materials such as timber, bamboo, and other forest products. These materials can support local industries, reduce import dependence, and promote export-oriented production.

Biomass from forests can be used as a renewable energy source, reducing reliance on fossil fuels and supporting energy security.

The Green Legacy Initiative not only addresses environmental challenges but also provides a wide range of economic benefits, from job creation and improved agricultural productivity to enhanced water resources, ecotourism, and participation in global carbon markets. These benefits contribute to sustainable economic growth and development in Ethiopia.

Both YelematTrufat program, Green Legacy Initiative and food security programs serve as a transition belt to the development of climate resilient agro-industrial development in Ethiopia.

Agro-industries in Ethiopia have been steadily developing, driven by the country's rich agricultural resources and strategic government initiatives. Here's an overview of the key aspects and developments in the agro-industry sector in Ethiopia:

Ethiopia is endowed with diverse agro-ecological zones suitable for growing a variety of crops, including coffee, grains, pulses, oilseeds, fruits, and vegetables. The country is one of the largest producers of coffee and sesame seeds globally, which form the backbone of its agro-industrial sector. The Ethiopian government has implemented various policies and strategies to boost agro-industrial development. These include the Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP) and the Agricultural Growth Program (AGP).

The government has established agro-industrial parks to facilitate the processing and value addition of agricultural products.

Several Integrated Agro-Industrial Parks (IAIPs) have been established in Ethiopia to promote the agro-processing sector. These parks provide infrastructure, support services, and facilities to enhance productivity.

Notable IAIPs include those in Bure, Yirgalem, Bulbula, and Baeker, which focus on processing crops like fruits, vegetables, cereals, and livestock products. The agro-industry sector has attracted significant foreign investment, particularly in the areas of floriculture, horticulture, and large-scale farming. Foreign investors are involved in producing and exporting flowers, fruits, vegetables, and other high-value crops. Ethiopia is focused on adding value to its agricultural products through processing and packaging. This helps in increasing export revenues and creating employment opportunities. Agro-industrial activities include the processing of

coffee, oilseeds, pulses, dairy products, meat, and leather goods.

Despite the progress, the agro-industry sector faces challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, limited access to finance, and occasional political instability. Other issues include logistical bottlenecks, low levels of technology adoption, and challenges in maintaining quality standards for export. Significant investments are being made in improving infrastructure, including roads, energy supply, and irrigation systems, which are crucial for the growth of agro-industries.

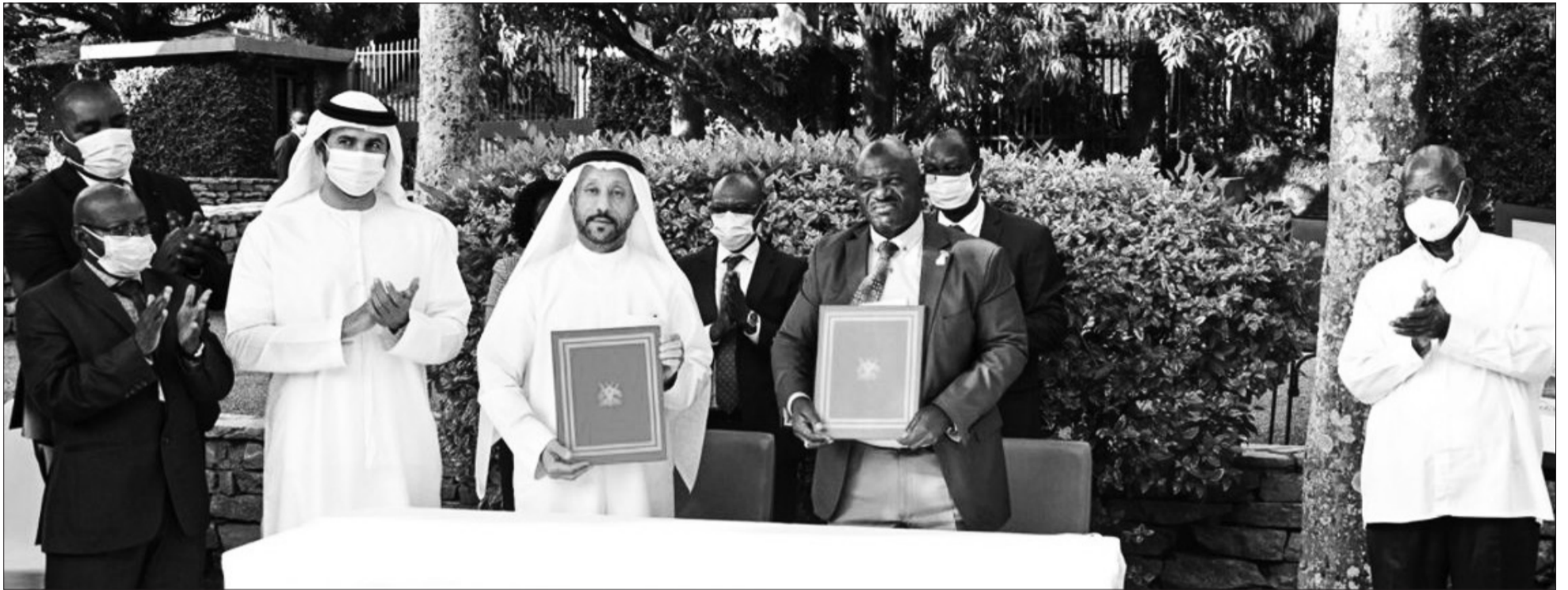
The government encourages public-private partnerships to develop the agro-industrial sector. This includes collaboration with international organizations and private companies to enhance agricultural productivity and processing capabilities.

Efforts are being made to modernize agriculture through the adoption of new technologies, including mechanization, improved seed varieties, and better farming practices. There has been a consistent increase in the export of processed agricultural products, contributing to foreign exchange earnings and economic growth.

Ethiopia is renowned for its high-quality coffee, which is a major export product. A significant export commodity used in the food industry. Ethiopia is a leading exporter of cut flowers, particularly roses. Increasing production and export of fresh and processed fruits and vegetable helps the country to generate more income from the sectors. Development of dairy processing plants and meat processing facilities are all yet to be fully exploited to reach to the level of quality exports.

The reader will therefore be able to see the importance of linkage between the above mentioned components of the Ethiopian economy.

International



Uganda signs deal with UAE to build new international airport

President Yoweri Museveni (far right) witnessed the signing of an MoU between Uganda and UAE's Sharjah Chamber of Commerce for the construction of Kidepo International Airport in Karamoja. Minister of Works and Transport Gen Edward Katumba Wamala signed on behalf of Uganda with chairman Abdallah Sultan Al Owais for Sharjah Chamber of Commerce.

Uganda has signed a pact with a business association from the United Arab Emirates to build a new international airport, President Yoweri Museveni's office said on Friday.

The deal for the country's third such airport expands the UAE's economic footprint beyond its interests in the renewable energy and oil and gas industries.

The main airport is Entebbe, on the northern shores of Lake Victoria, in central

Uganda. Kabalega International Airport in the oil-rich Hoima District in western Uganda is under construction.

The UAE's Sharjah Chamber of Commerce and Industry will build the airport just outside the Kidepo National Park in the northeast near Uganda's border with Kenya, Museveni's office said in a statement, without giving the cost.

Construction will start in August, said Abdallah Sultan Al Owais, chairman of

the Sharjah business body.

The airport will boost tourism by drawing visitors to the 1,442 sq-km Kidepo park known for lions, giraffes, buffaloes and other big game.

The agreement was "a sign of the deepening relations with our Gulf partners and another opportunity to co-operate in investment and trade", Museveni, who witnessed the signing, said in a post on X.

Source: The East African

Somalia tables roadmap to EAC integration

Somalia has deposited its roadmap of fully integrating into the East African Community, signalling an extra market for the region of close to 20 million people when the process is completed.

The roadmap presented on Monday in Nairobi specifies timelines within which the Horn of Africa country will implement the required policies and harmonise its laws to enable it to join the region's customs union and common market protocols.

"Today's meeting signifies a critical milestone in this journey, aligning Somalia's national processes with regional frameworks to ensure comprehensive integration," EAC Secretary-General Veronica Nduva said.

"The roadmap outlines essential activities categorised into national and community-oriented initiatives. These include aligning Somalia's legal framework with established regional standards and ensuring robust participation in EAC programmes and activities" she added.

While the actual timelines agreed in the

meeting were not disclosed, the Somali delegation exuded confidence in their commitment to fully integrate into the community soon.

"We are dedicated to working closely with all stakeholders towards a brighter and more prosperous future for all EAC member states and their citizens," said Abdusalam Omer, Somalia's presidential envoy for EAC, who led talks into joining the bloc last year.

Only five of the eight member countries in the regional bloc have been able to fully integrate, meaning they can freely trade with one another after harmonising their laws.

Somalia was admitted into the bloc by the Heads of State Summit in November and became a full member in March this year after depositing its instruments of membership and assenting to the regional treaty.

Source: The East African

IMF approves over \$900m to support Tanzania budget, climate change fight

The IMF said on Thursday its executive board approved funding for Tanzania of \$786.2 million to help tackle climate change while also completing a separate review allowing for the disbursement of \$149.4 million for budget support.

Tanzanian authorities are committed to continue implementing reforms to preserve macro-financial stability, strengthen economic recovery, and promote sustainable and inclusive growth, the International Monetary Fund said in a statement.

In the last three years, President Samia Suluhu Hassan's administration has undertaken various economic reforms with ambitions to return the country's economic growth to the pre-pandemic real gross domestic product growth rate of six percent to seven percent.

Tanzania's economic reform programme remained strong, the IMF said, adding that economic growth rebounded in 2023 after

slowing down in 2022.

"The current account deficit is narrowing, reflecting fiscal consolidation, easing commodity prices, and tight external financing conditions," the IMF said.

While economic recovery is expected to gain momentum going forward, the IMF noted that it faced headwinds from an "unfavourable global economic environment."

Tanzania's economy, which relies on tourism, mining, agriculture and manufacturing, has remained resilient in the face of back-to-back extreme weather events and climate change, driven by a surge in the services sector, according to the World Bank.

The economy is forecast to accelerate to 5.4 percent this calendar year, up from 5.1 percent in 2023, minister of state in the president's Office for Planning and Investment Kitila Mkumbo said last week.

Source: The East African

Verbatim and Caption

Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia Meets with President of the 78th UN General Assembly

Ethiopian government's primary focus is on its development agenda and the ongoing efforts will continue to ensure peace consolidation, the need for the reform of the United Nations to make it fit for current global realities and also noting Ethiopia's strong participation in the upcoming "Summit of the Future" in September, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia, Ambassador Taye Atske Selassie



Ethiopian High-level delegation led by Adem Farah participated at the BRICS countries of political parties' international forum

Regarding the longstanding and strong economic partnership between Ethiopia and China, citing the various Chinese companies currently working in Ethiopia, Adem expressed gratitude to China for its unwavering support throughout Ethiopia's difficult times.

The Vice President also affirmed Ethiopia's strong desire to further strengthen the relations between the two countries.

He has also appreciated the government and Communist Party of China for their diplomatic endeavors to help Ethiopia join the BRICS, a bloc very important in the international diplomacy sphere.

Ethiopia is committed to elevate its strategic partnership with China to a higher level, Adem said inviting officials of Chinese Communist Party including Liu Jianchao to visit Ethiopia.

Ethiopia's Participation in BRICS Forums in Russia Bears Diplomatic Achievements

Key measures undertaken by the Government of Ethiopia aimed at enhancing the role of Ethiopia within BRICS and called for an increased constructive role of the BRICS member countries on pressing international issues. The need for reforming the United Nations, international financial and security institutions taking into consideration of the interests of developing countries,

Ministry of Foreign Affairs Spokesperson Nebyu Tedla



Ethiopia Proved Cooperation Competency at BRICS Int'l Forum

Ethiopia has registered impressive diplomatic victory at the forum. Ethiopia is known for its leading role in international solidarity from the League of Nations to the present United Nations and has made great contributions from the establishment of the Organization of African Unity to the African Union.

The Prosperity Party has affirmed Ethiopia's strong position for international and multipolar solidarity at the forum.

Ethiopia has also demonstrated its effective diplomacy under the leadership of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and the ruling Prosperity Party by joining the emerging BRICS bloc,

Prosperity Party (PP) Public and International Relations Head, Addisu Arega