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Turkiye desirous of bolstering commercial ties with Ethiopia

• Hails Green Legacy Program

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

ADDIS ABABA – Turkiye, the second leading foreign investor in Ethiopia, wants to grow its trade and investment portfolio, the country’s ambassador said, mentioning the diplomatic efforts that aim to drive more Turkish businesses.

Ambassador Berk Baran told *The Ethiopian Herald* that a growing number of Turkish investors have shown interest to involve in Ethiopia’s priority sectors and explore its business prospects. “Every week, more companies come to Turkish Embassy to learn about Ethiopia’s trade and investment opportunities.”

Ethiopia, with 120 million and plus population and immense natural resources, offers a huge opportunities to attract Turkish anchor companies. Owing to the two countries’ 128 years-old cordial relations and the meticulous diplomatic efforts, Turkiye is the second largest foreign investor in Ethiopia.

Similarly, flag carries of the two countries, Ethiopian Airlines and Turkish Airways



See Turkiye desirous... page 3 *Amb. Berk Baran*

Office mobilizes over 1.3 billion Birr to Abbay Dam

BY YESUF ENDRIS

ADDIS ABABA – Abbay Dam Coordination Office announced that it has mobilized more than 1.3 billion Birr to the construction of the mega project in the last 11 months.

The Office of the National Council for Coordination of Public Participation on the Construction of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) announced that more than 1.3 billion Birr has been raised to the construction of the mega dam which is being built on the Abbay River.

Of the stated amount of finance, some 1.1 billion Birr was gained from domestic bond sales while 119.8 and 72.8 million Birr was collected through SMS fundraising, and from local grants respectively, the Office said.

In a report sent to *The Ethiopian Herald*, the Office expressed that

See Office mobilizes... page 3



Ayelech Eshete

MoE underscores combined effort to bring quality education

BY MESERET BEHAILU

ADDIS ABABA – The Ministry of Education (MoE) underlined that concerted effort is required to overcome capacity and infrastructural challenges to ensure quality education.

See MoE underscores... page 3

Ethio telecom inks strategic agreement with AAU, Black Lion Hospital

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

ADDIS ABABA- Ethio telecom has signed strategic partnership agreement with Addis Ababa University (AAU) and Black Lion Hospital aiming to digitalize the activities delivered by both institutions.

The state-owned telecom company signed an agreement with AAU entitled ‘smart campus for academic excellence’ while it agreed to make all payments of the Black lion hospital through Telebirr.

During the signing ceremony, Chief Executive Officer of Ethio telecom, Frehiwot Tameru stated that the agreement would allow both institutions to effectively use their resource with safe and better technology.

She said that agreement would make Addis Ababa University (AAU) which is the oldest university in the country, to become competitive and deliver quality education, and hassle free services. “Supporting AAU

See Ethio telecom... page 3



TVET Week displays sector's status

BY EYUEL KIFLU

ADDIS ABABA- The preparation of the citywide Technical and Vocational Education and Training Week has created a great opportunity to show the status of the sector to the society, the City Administration announced.

The closing ceremony of the 14th citywide TVET Week held yesterday at the Addis Ababa Exhibition Center.

Speaking at the occasion, Mekbeb Woldehana, Head of the Enterprise and Technology Development Sector of the Addis Ababa City Administration said that the preparation of the week has made it possible to make the society aware of the level of technology and innovation that the sector has reached.

The event is also of great significance to strengthen the ties between technical and professional institutions. In this way, young people who have a profession have been motivated to solve the problems of the society in a scientific way.

According to Mekbeb, the Addis Ababa Skill and Labor Bureau is paying due attention to produce competitive and skilled human resources in the TVET sector. "Inventions presented during the week are multiplied and help to ensure the benefit of the society and create an initiative to produce proxy products on a large scale.

Equal considerations will also be given to make TVET institutions accessible. TVET colleges will continue to work on capacity building so that they can play their part in creating a qualified and competitive workforce.

During the week, various events including technological innovation, handicrafts and



Mekbeb Woldehana

fashion show competitions were held, and the products and indigenous works of the young entrepreneurs of the TVET Colleges in the city were put on display.

More than 50,000 members of the public visited during the technical and professional week that was held from June 22 to 27.

The head further mentioned that techniques and skills should be made to act as proxies and solve problems in the required quality and quantity by increasing productivity. "The Bureau will work with determination so that

the products bring results in relation to the problems on the ground."

Trophies and various incentive prizes were given to professionals and colleges who won in various fields of the program.

The 14th City-wide Technical and Vocational Education and Training Week was opened by Mayor Adanech Abebe, and the closing program was attended by heads of the Addis Ababa City Administration's Labor and Skills Bureau, invited guests and various members of society.

Locally made automobile on display

BY STAFF REPORTER

Habtamu Abera has been working in a car garage while pursuing his study at night in a TVET college. After concluding finishing school in a competency-based training, he has worked in the automotive industry for 15 years, which enabled him to develop his skill in the field.

He expressed that he is always ardent to know and discover something new. "It is easy to innovate if we have the enthusiasm to learn and know new things." Habtamu's growing interest and understanding in mechanical engineering, pushed him to read and learn more about car making on the internet.

The thorough reading, learning and exploring things pertained to the automotive industry has helped Habtamu to develop basic understanding about car making and stimulate him to build his own car through trial and error.

Today, Habtamu is showcasing his handmade Lamborghini-like car model named after the company he is working for, HBM, at the 14th



city-based TVET week.

Habtamu has built the car while contemplating about the international brand car models such as Lamborghini, Ferrari and others. It took him two years to prepare spare parts and assembled them.

"I had effective but laborious time while building the car from the scratch. Despite the tedious tasks, I have experienced enjoying moments throughout the progress of each step," he recalled.

The building of the car has costed about three million Birr. The Bole Manufacturing College

has helped him in supplying the components. According to him, the car is just a demonstration of the upcoming several car products.

Such kind of automobiles are expensive, which used by celebrities in the developed world, he indicated.

Habtamu is keen to build more cars to customers in a short period of time if he gets a work space and auto parts.

Similar cars like the one produced by Habtamu can cost about three million USD though his car has not been given price so far.

Habtamu has created jobs for 15 permanent, and other temporary workers.

Everyone has a certain goal, but it requires a strong commitment and effort to achieve such objective by withstanding challenges. Human being will achieve success if start working from the grassroots level and eventually progress with patience.

Habtamu has planned to supply more Ethiopian branded luxurious and weather friendly cars to the international market.



Elias Gedamu

Zone provides incoming investors with coffee yield

BY YESUF ENDRIS

ADDIS ABABA- Majang zone of Gambella regional state is supplying 45 tons of coffee within a year, so stated Zone Chief Administrator.

Speaking to Ethiopian Press Agency, Chief Administrator of Majang Zone, Elias Gedamu said that the Zone, having fertile soil and suitable environment for coffee production, is supplying significant amount of production to the export market.

"The administration will provide incoming investors with farm lands and relevant support. The natural resource in region as well as in Majang is still untouched," he said.

The natural resource in Majang has gained the recognition of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and forests are evergreen and bio-diversified. Coffee farming is also becoming lucrative; so investors from in and out of the country can invest in the sector effortlessly, according to the Chief Administrator.

He further stated that investors can engage in spice, livestock mining and cereal productions. Several mining products are highly needed in the global market are abundant in the region, he added.

Despite the huge investment potential, the number of investors coming to the area is small. The infrastructure that investors need as a precondition is not developed. The growing construction of infrastructures is expected to add values to attract investors, he mentioned.

The zone is surrounded by densely forested areas which makes the climatic condition relatively similar throughout the year, he added.

News

High-level Saudi business delegation to visit Ethiopia

BY STAFF REPORTER

ADDIS ABABA- A delegation consisting of senior officials of various Saudi Arabian ministries and investors will soon travel to Ethiopia under the coordination of the Kingdom's Ministry of Economy and Planning.

The above was disclosed yesterday while Ethiopia's Ambassador to Saudi Arabia Lencho Bati held a deliberation with the Kingdom's Economy and Planning State Minister Albara bin Bassim Alaskandarani on ways to enhance the two countries' trade and investment relations.

According to Ethiopia's Embassy in Riyadh, the main purpose of the visit is to meet and talk with high-ranking government officials on the Ethiopian side about the possible ways to strengthen the two countries multifaceted partnership.

Following Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's participation in the Saudi-Africa Summit in Riyadh, the two countries bilateral relationship has been strengthened.

It is to be recalled that from June 5 to June 7, 2024, a group of investors consisting of ninety-seven delegation members come to Ethiopia for a pre-investment visit.

Besides being a developmental ally, Saudi



Arabia is among the leading source of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in Ethiopia and there are a large number of Saudi companies active in various sectors in agriculture, livestock, light industries, mining and extraction of gold, and the Hotel sector.

Because of its proximity to the Middle East and the favorable investment policy, Ethiopia could be one of the leading suppliers of agricultural products to Saudi Arabia, it was stated.

Bilateral relations between the two countries date back to thousands of years ago, when Companions of Prophet Muhammad reached in Ethiopia seeking refuge, in the first and second Hijra.

Diplomatic relations between the two countries began in 1948, when Saudi Arabia opened its embassy in Addis Ababa, placed it among the first Arab countries to start diplomatic relation with Ethiopia.

Ethio telecom inks...

means making the society and the nation skilled and competitive at the world stage," she underscored.

The CEO further highlighted the efforts that have been put towards making various sectors digitalized exemplifying the works done in Smart Education and Smart Agriculture.

Underlining that AAU is a pioneer institution in sharing best experiences, she expressed optimism that the university as well as the telecom company would put utmost effort to engage other universities to follow similar steps in the digitalization activities.

Samuel Kifle(PhD), Acting President of Addis Ababa University(AAU) on his part mentioned that the strategic agreement would serve as a tool to enhance academic and service excellence.

Highlighting the digitalization activities that have been performed along with Ethio telecom, the President also indicated that the agreement would play a vital role in supporting the goal of realizing digital Ethiopia.

The activities that AAU undertakes with Ethio

telecom leads towards digitalization, he noted, adding that the cooperation will ensure quality education and enable AAU to be competent at international level.

Thus, other higher education institutions need to follow this footstep in order to help nation realize the goals of digital Ethiopia 2025, he underlined.

The university is carrying out various activities with its strategic partner, Ethio telecom such as technological infrastructure building, industry linkage, teaching-learning, research and social services as well as technologies that support entrepreneurship.

The agreement is said to digitalize 50 class rooms, Campus gates, administration buildings, museums, cafeterias, libraries, and student and teacher dormitories.

It will also ensure safe teaching and learning environment and safeguards the safety of the entire campus compounding using CCTV, security controlling station and other vital infrastructures.

MoE underscores...

The above statement was made by Education State Minister Ayelech Eshete yesterday at the 11th International Annual Quality Education Conference that was held under the theme "Go public fund education," organized by the Ethiopian Teachers Association (ETA).

In her opening speech, Ayelech said that quality education required combined effort and commitment. In this regard, some 25 billion Birr was collected to improve schools in a move to ensure quality education as per the government initiation.

According to her, Ethiopia has been challenged by lack of quality education over the past many years so that the government has established education, training, and policy curriculum to realize the expected result in education arena.

Education is the secret behind the success of the developed nations. Therefore, realizing home grown knowledge is crucial to end the education problems as well, she added.

Similarly, the ministry is working in close with ETA to address many constraints in education sphere.

ETA's President Yohannes Benti (PhD) on his part said that the association that has over 700,000 members, has been working for years to ensure quality education in Ethiopia through conducting researches and carrying out conferences and so on.

According to him, shortage of competent teachers, presence of fake education documents, poor school quality and the likes are serious challenges that are hindering to

realize quality education across Ethiopia.

Not only Ethiopia but also many countries across the globe have been encountering lack of quality education. Therefore, it needs stakeholders' integration to reduce the problem working with joint effort, he added.

Presenting a discussion paper on the conference, Education International Africa Director, Dennis Sinyolo (PhD) indicated that lack of adequate infrastructure is notable challenge to meet quality education in the African continent.

He also added that combined effort is an urgent issue to achieve agenda 2063, which poised to ensure quality and inclusive education for all citizens.

Office mobilizes...

the additional 15.6 million and 362,150 Birr respectively was gained from the diaspora support and PIN sales.

The Office also mentioned that it has mobilized over 106.9 million Birr in the month of May alone.

The significant portion of this amount, 94.6 million Birr, was collected from domestic contributors mainly through bond sales, it said, adding that the diaspora community has also contributed some 676,000 Birr through buying bonds.

Furthermore, the Office collected 11,108,374 and 10,000 Birr respectively from SMS fundraising and PIN sales. Moreover, local grants that have been given through the Ethiopian Electric Utility Offices contributed 537,862 Birr, the Office stated.

Since the beginning of the construction of the dam, cumulative contributions have reached more than 19.5 billion Birr of which, domestic bond sales have brought in 17.1 billion Birr which includes a diaspora contribution of 1.4 billion Birr and the finance raised from special fundraising events is also close to one billion Birr, the report indicated.

Turkiye desirous...

fly daily to Istanbul and Addis Ababa thus facilitating the commercial relations.

According to Ambassador *Baran*, due to the comparative abundance of farmlands, infrastructure development and trainable workforce for the manufacturing industry.

Ethiopia has captured the attention of Turkish investors.

Mentioning the promising trade exchange between the two countries, the ambassador emphasized the need to adjust the trade imbalance. Accordingly, consolidated efforts are underway to increase the trade volume and diversify tradable commodities.

He also noted that the Turkish government is committed to the furtherance of the current economic partnership with Ethiopia and successive dialogues are underway with the government of Ethiopia to attract more businesses.

Meanwhile, Ambassador Baran said that the Turkish Embassy in Addis Ababa is closely following Ethiopia's Green Legacy Program and acknowledged its positive impact in the environment. "Every country has a responsibility to fight against climate change by investing in green energy initiatives and Africans are expected to create synergy to push the issue to the global area."

Despite its insignificant contribution to global warming, Africa has been facing the adverse impact of climate change due to the heavy industries of the developed world. "It is important to the continent to have its voice on the issue," he emphasized.

It is to be recalled that recently, Turkish Embassy was organized a geo-political deliberation in Addis Ababa to confer on geo-political trends and developments.

In terms of diplomatic ties, Ethiopia and Turkiye have enjoyed a long-lasting relation in that Addis Ababa hosted the oldest Turkish embassy in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Opinion

The perks of Ethiopia's Pretoria Peace Agreement implementation

BY ADDISALEM MULAT

In the present climate, Ethiopia's Pretoria Peace Agreement implementation has been heading in the right direction. On the basis thereof, the intended target is being attained. For the sake of truth, breakthrough step demonstrates Africa's capacity to resolve its internal conflicts and bolster peace and stability in Northern Ethiopia. Above and beyond, the AU-led peace deal provides a vital basis for promoting lasting peace, stability, and reconciliation.

In today's environment, the move being taken by the federal government to reach a peace agreement and return the whole kit and caboodle in conflict affected areas to normalcy has been very much appreciated by the broader international community.

There is no denying the fact that the AU-led brokered peace deal has brought an end to the conflict that lasted for two years in Northern Ethiopia.

It is worth remembering that the agreement has been going on according to plan and the timetable, with an Interim administration formed and TPLF, delisted from the list of terrorist groups. To ensure accountability, the incumbent also launched the work of transitional justice.

As demobilization and reintegration are important moves for ensuring lasting peace and tranquility in every nook and cranny of the country, all pertinent bodies should take part in the process without batting an eye.

The other thing is that as the realization of the demobilization and reintegration process fully hinges on the uncompromising stance of the incumbent, international entities, competing parties, and other segments of society and other pertinent bodies should join hands more than ever before.

Considering the current circumstances, as the government has been successfully bringing into effective action the Pretoria Peace Agreement, war-torn areas have set in motion seeing light at the end of the tunnel and taking a turn for the better.

The Pretoria Peace Agreement has immensely benefited the Tigray people in enabling them to pursue their daily lives without fear and restoring the damaged social services, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) said.

It is recalled that responding to queries of MPs in the recent past, Abiy highlighted that the accord that was signed in November 2022 with the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) plays a pivotal role in silencing the guns and enabling the Tigray people to access basic services.

The Federal Government's infrastructure renovation projects that have been undertaken in collaboration with the Tigray Interim Administration have enabled the Tigray people to obtain electricity, health, education, telecommunication, air transport and bank services among others.

In addition, the restoration of airports at a cost of about half a billion Birr and the resumption of flights to and from Mekelle, Axum and Shire cities has also relieved the people and saved



lives, the Premier underlined.

"The flight resumption is a relief for many. At least it helped critically ill patients to get better treatment here in Addis Ababa."

Noting the resumption of Tigray universities and high schools' enrollment of students, Abiy stressed that this result couldn't be achieved had not it been for the strong and collaborative efforts of the Ministry of Education and the state education bureau.

According to him, the restoration of over 1000 km of optical fibers, 475 Mobile Sites and more than over 20,000 landlines as well as Ethio Telecom's launching of 4G telecom service in 10 cities at a cost of more than 100 million Birr is another success gained after the Pretoria Agreement.

By the same token, the National Bank of Ethiopia has injected 10 billion Birr liquidity to 600 commercial bank branches to recommence bank service in Tigray. "In terms of agricultural activities, 630,000 hectares of land have been cultivated in the state last rainy season," Abiy said, adding that 500 tractors bought with the support of the Federal Government have been arrived at Djibouti Port.

Notwithstanding the fact that the positive developments taking shape in the length and breadth of war-ravaged areas, the country's deadliest foes and discredited international media outlets have continued spreading cock and bull stories and misleading information that do not reflect the existing reality on the ground.

Though Ethiopia's foes leave no stone unturned to drag through the mud the actual accomplishments burgeoning throughout the national territory by turning a blind eye, all their endeavors have been going for a burton, and biting the ground.

Bahir Dar University Political Science and International Relations Assistant Professor Yayew Genet recently told the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that the ability to solve internal problems independently would have a significant impact on creating strong unity among the people of Ethiopia. The truce also has the ability to ensure sustainable peace and development in the country.

Likewise, resolving problems in accordance with the political culture of the country should ensure inclusive growth and also avoid external interference and pressure. The situation would also open the space for promoting the political culture and ability of countries to solve their problems by internal mechanisms.

The government of Ethiopia has, in practical terms, demonstrated its commitment to resolving the conflict peacefully through the auspices of the continental body. Ethiopia believes that the principle of 'seeking African solutions to African problems' shall dictate the policies of those involved in the conflict and those advocating for a negotiated peace.

It is an indisputable fact that since the beginning of the cessation of the hostilities agreement, the northern part of the country has jump started breathing a sigh of relief and progressing in the right direction.

Needless to say, as peace is the cornerstone for individual existence, pertinent bodies have been standing by the side of the federal government intending to accelerate the peace implementation to the level expected at the earliest possible time.

It is important to highlight that the incumbent in several instances has shown its stance to comply with the rules and regulations of the African Union (AU) led peace agreement despite some low-rated media outlets cocked up stories that do not reflect the existing reality on the ground.

In fact, Ethiopia's stance proves its confidence in Africa's capability to resolve its predicaments on its own way without third-party interference.

It is worth remembering that though a number of undertakings have been made by Ethiopia's foes to give little prominence to African Union-led peace deal and give a lower profile to its role, the country in the fullness of time turned out to be successful in achieving the desired goal almost immediately.

After the peace deal there has been speedy progress in terms of the delivery of humanitarian assistance, restoration of social infrastructure, and other basic services. The positive accomplishments being taken by the federal government have been time and time

again bearing fruits.

The huge move being taken by the federal government in the absence of third party's dictation demonstrates the firm stance of the federal government to end conflicts. It as well has been proven the resolve of the federal government to make peace happen in the length and breadth of Northern Ethiopia.

Speaking in recent times to the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) Addis Ababa University Political Science Lecturer Shimelis Hailu stated that the Pretoria accord not only curtailed the damage that had been posed on the livelihoods of civilians, but also it tackled the immense damage that had been posed in strategic infrastructure.

Ethiopia's ability to cease hostilities could be taken as a huge lesson for Africa as well as for the rest of the world. History has taught us that it took many years to reach an agreement for many countries in similar fashion as they failed to build trust on the outcomes.

Most unrest in Africa took almost decades to be resolved. In this regard, the situation in Ethiopia could be said to be resolved in a short period of time given the intensity of the conflict at the time, the expert emphasized.

The agreement allowed putting an end to prolonged war that could cost the lives of many more civilians. Apart from serving as a model for African countries, this success shows a new path to peaceful resolution to differences for similar situations in the country.

Despite the fact that the civil war has remained part of Ethiopia's history, it is crystal clear that nothing good has come out of wars. Thus, it could be a clear indicator that such agreements could bring lasting solutions to the nation extended political conflicts.

The government is expected to create an environment where there is zero sound of guns. The same is true for actors that have different opinions on issues from the government.

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

Editorial

Ethiopia needs to cultivate its vast natural resources to reduce aid dependence

Ethiopia, with its vast arable land and rich natural resources, can make prosperity a reality for its citizens. Cultivating these resources can make the nation eliminate all the problems related to poverty and reduce aid dependence. International aid has been crucial in times of need, but this reliance has created a dependency that hampers sustainable development and self-sufficiency. Additionally, donor influence often conflicts with national policies. To achieve true economic independence and protect its sovereignty, Ethiopia must focus on utilizing its agricultural and natural resources while reducing external influence.

Ethiopia has very vast hectares of arable land, yet only a small portion is utilized. The country's diverse climate and fertile soil can support a variety of crops, from staples like teff, maize, and wheat to valuable exports such as coffee and horticultural products. However, outdated farming methods, poor infrastructure, and limited market access hinder agricultural productivity.

In addition to agriculture, Ethiopia's natural resources, including significant reserves of gold, tantalum, and potash, remain largely untapped. The Abbay river also offers substantial hydroelectric potential that could meet domestic energy needs and position Ethiopia as a regional power supplier.

Moving from aid dependence to self-sufficiency requires a comprehensive strategy that includes strategic investments, policy reforms, and capacity building.

Above all, investing in modern agricultural practices, irrigation systems, and infrastructure is essential. Extension services that provide training and resources to farmers can significantly boost productivity. Encouraging private investment in agriculture and providing access to credit will help farmers adopt innovative techniques and increase yields.

Next, enhancing rural infrastructure, such as roads and storage facilities, will reduce post-harvest losses and improve market access for farmers. Strengthening supply chains and developing agro-processing industries can add value to agricultural products and create jobs.

In addition, Ethiopia must tap into its mineral wealth and hydro-electric potential. Sustainable and transparent mining practices can attract foreign investment and generate revenue for national development. Developing hydroelectric projects, while ensuring environmental sustainability and fair water distribution with neighboring countries, can provide a reliable energy source and stimulate economic growth.

Effective governance and policy reforms are crucial to creating a conducive environment for investment and development. Streamlining bureaucratic processes, combating corruption, and securing property rights will build investor confidence and attract both domestic and foreign investments.

Investing in education and vocational training will equip the workforce with the skills needed for a modern economy. Encouraging research and development in agriculture, mining, and energy sectors can drive innovation and enhance productivity.

While international aid has been beneficial, it often comes with conditions that align with donor interests rather than national priorities. Ethiopia must reduce this influence to ensure its development path aligns with its own strategic goals. By becoming more self-reliant, Ethiopia can negotiate from a position of strength, making decisions that best serve its population.

International partners still have a role in supporting Ethiopia's transition. Instead of perpetuating aid dependency, donors should focus on providing technical assistance, capacity building, and investments in key sectors. Partnerships that facilitate technology transfer, infrastructure development, and access to international markets can accelerate Ethiopia's progress toward self-reliance while respecting its sovereignty.

In sum, Ethiopia is at a crossroads, with the potential to transform its abundant arable land and natural resources into drivers of sustainable development. By prioritizing strategic investments, policy reforms, and capacity building, the country can reduce its dependence on aid, limit donor influence, and move toward economic self-sufficiency and realize the intended prosperity.



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The Ethiopian Herald

Opinion

Ethiopia's homegrown economic policy: Strategy to realize prosperity

BY EPHREM ANDARGACHEW

Following the mid-2018 political reform in the country, Ethiopia has implemented several domestic economic measures to promote development and economic growth. Through various strategies, including infrastructure development, industry, tourism, and agricultural modernization, the goal is to create sustainable and inclusive growth.

The Industrial Development Strategy, which highlights industrialization and the manufacturing sector as crucial drivers of economic growth, is a key component of the policy. This strategy aims to improve business environments, attract foreign direct investment, and support the growth of local enterprises. Additionally, industrialization is seen as a catalyst for economic expansion, promoting growth in the manufacturing sector, attracting foreign investment, and creating job opportunities across various industries.

As part of its domestic economic policy, the government has identified and prioritized development areas. Notably, agricultural development programs such as the Agricultural Transformation Agency (ATA) and the Agricultural Commercialization Clusters (ACC) program are in place to increase agricultural production, improve market access for smallholder farmers, and foster the growth of agribusiness.

The transformation of the agricultural sector is essential for boosting productivity, enhancing food security, and improving the livelihoods of smallholder farmers. Industry reform focuses on upgrading agricultural practices, adding value to products, and expanding market access for agricultural goods.

Moreover, the policy recognizes sustainable development as a critical element in economic policy. The strategy aims to achieve sustainable economic growth that is environmentally friendly and socially inclusive, balancing economic progress, environmental protection, and social equality.

Considering these factors, the government recently reviewed the performance of the 2016 fiscal year's last 100 days and outlined plans for 2017. Based on key macroeconomic sector performances over the past ten months, indicators suggest a 7.9 percent economic growth in the current fiscal year.

Effective execution in agriculture, industry, mining, and other sectors is crucial for meeting economic growth targets. For instance, the main season crop in agriculture exceeded the previous year's by 100 million quintals. Additionally, initiatives like the summer irrigation wheat program and the 'Bounty of the Basket' (Ye Lematirufat), a national development program launched by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, have shown promising results. By the end of May, 106 million quintals of summer irrigation wheat were harvested out of an anticipated 117 million quintals.

In the manufacturing sector, productivity has increased with the 'Made in Ethiopia' campaign, providing manufacturers with input

and financial support to operate at full capacity. As a result, gold and cement production have risen, with cement output surpassing last year's by over 1 million tons.

To stabilize the cost of living, the government has taken steps such as boosting local output and productivity, allowing duty-free imports of essential products, and expanding market infrastructure, leading to a decrease in total inflation to 23 percent. The service sector is also showing gradual improvement.

With the results from the previous fiscal year in mind, Ethiopia aims for an 8.3 percent economic growth in the 2017 Ethiopian fiscal year. This target considers current capabilities and future potential, with extensive preparations made, from policy changes to budgeting.

Ethiopia's Minister of Planning and Development, Fitsum Assefa, has set the goal of 8.3 percent economic growth for the 2017 fiscal year. Achieving this target will require increased coordination in agriculture, industry, mining, tourism, and the digital sectors. The strategy also emphasizes developing economic and social infrastructure to significantly reduce poverty. Efforts to control inflation will continue in the next fiscal year through operational improvements, increased output and productivity, and modernization of market infrastructure.

While the government's efforts through homegrown economic policies to achieve economic growth, stabilize the market, and promote overall development are commendable, other pressing challenges must be addressed. Increasing infrastructure development is crucial to ensure and promote economic growth, as infrastructure plays a vital role in transportation, energy development, and communications, facilitating commerce, attracting investment, and connecting rural and urban centers.

Although the homegrown economic policy recognizes the importance of investing in human capital, the government should also focus on human capital development through education, skills training, and healthcare to build a skilled workforce, drive innovation and entrepreneurship, and engage the private sector in job creation, fostering a favorable business environment, promoting competition, and supporting the growth of small and medium-sized enterprises.

Given the country's comparative advantages, the government should work towards promoting national unity and regional integration, as regional cooperation brings mutual benefits by enhancing market access, stimulating trade, and attracting investment from neighboring countries.

Overall, Ethiopia's homegrown economic policies aim to address the country's specific challenges and opportunities, focusing on long-term and inclusive growth that benefits all sectors of society. By leveraging both internal and external advantages, Ethiopia can achieve sustainable and inclusive economic growth that benefits not only the country but also its neighboring nations.

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

Business & Economy



Illegal cattle trade affects the nation's tax collection efforts

Broadening the tax base to galvanize revenue

BY STAFF REPORTER

Ethiopia has long faced challenges in due course of effectively collecting tax revenue to fund vital public services and infrastructure development. With a growing population and increasing demands on the government's budget, finding ways to strengthen the tax system has become a critical priority.

In assessing how best to collect taxes, it is important to keep in mind two primary objectives of tax administration: To apply the tax laws uniformly, to achieve maximum collection at minimum costs, and, to promote voluntary compliance by taxpayers.

One key area of focus should be expanding the tax base. Currently, Ethiopia's tax-to-GDP ratio stands at around 12%, which is low compared to many other African countries. This suggests there is significant room to bring more individuals and businesses into the tax system. Improving taxpayer registration, cracking down on tax evasion, and formalizing the large informal sector could all help widen the tax base. Streamlining tax administration is another important lever. Outdated and complex tax policies and procedures often create opportunities for avoidance and evasion. Modernizing tax IT systems, training tax officials, and simplifying compliance requirements could enhance efficiency and make it harder for taxpayers to slip through the cracks.

Transparency and accountability must also be prioritized. Implementing robust auditing and verification processes, publishing tax collection data, and cracking down on corruption can help build public trust and encourage voluntary compliance. Taxpayers are more likely to pay their fair share if they believe the system is fair and the funds are being used properly.

Finally, the government should consider expanding tax handles beyond the traditional income, sales, and excise taxes. Exploring new revenue sources like property taxes, capital gains taxes, and environmental taxes could diversify the tax mix and make the system more resilient.

Overhauling a nation's tax system is never easy, but Ethiopia has a pressing need and significant potential for improvement. By taking a comprehensive, multi-pronged approach, the country can strengthen its fiscal foundations and generate the resources required to fulfill its development aspirations. Enhancing tax collection is a challenging but vital task for Ethiopia's policymakers in the years ahead.

According to documents, tax collection

progress in Ethiopia has shown some promising developments, but also faces ongoing challenges:

Ethiopia has seen a gradual increase in its tax-to-GDP ratio in recent years, rising from around 10% in the early 2010s to around 12-13% by the late 2010s.

However, this ratio remains relatively low compared to the sub-Saharan Africa regional average of around 15-17%.

The government has set ambitious targets to increase the tax-to-GDP ratio to 17-18% by 2025, but achieving this will require substantial reforms.

Ethiopia has made efforts to expand its tax base by registering more taxpayers, especially in the informal sector.

The number of registered taxpayers has grown from around 2 million in the early 2010s to over 3.5 million by 2020.

However, a significant portion of economic activity remains outside the formal tax system, limiting revenue potential.

The Ethiopian Revenues and Customs Authority (ERCA) had undergone some modernization efforts, such as deploying electronic tax filing and payment systems.

Training programs have been implemented to build the skills of tax officials, but capacity constraints persist, especially at the regional and local levels.

Coordination and information sharing across different tax agencies remains a challenge, hindering effective compliance monitoring and enforcement.

Tax evasion, under-reporting, and the large informal economy continue to be major impediments to improving tax collection.

The government has taken steps to enhance audit and investigation capabilities, but the scale of the problem remains significant.

Improving taxpayer services, simplifying compliance procedures, and fostering voluntary compliance are areas that require further attention.

Ethiopia has introduced some tax policy changes, such as adjusting tax rates and expanding the tax base.

However, there is room for more comprehensive tax policy reforms to align the system with national development priorities and international best practices.

Consistent and predictable tax policies can also help build taxpayer trust and encourage compliance.

Overall, Ethiopia has made progress in enhancing its tax collection efforts, sustaining and accelerating this progress will require a multi-pronged approach that addresses both administrative and policy-level challenges. Continued commitment to tax administration modernization, strengthening coordination, and implementing strategic tax policy reforms will be crucial for Ethiopia to achieve its revenue mobilization goals.

As it is understood, in the last three decades the governments tried their level best to alleviate poverty, through implementing various economic programs. To support the effort various infrastructures such as roads, rail ways, hydroelectric power dams, irrigation farming, Airports, industrial parks and other social service provision institutions are expanded. According to the official sources, the government has a lion share in spending finance for the construction of the infrastructures. With such endeavor two digits economic growth endorsed by International Financial Institutions witnessed.

According to the World Bank report, Ethiopia's economy has shown significant progress and development over the past few decades, driven by various factors including economic reforms, infrastructure investments, and a growing young population. Here are some key aspects of Ethiopia's economic progress:

Ethiopia has experienced robust economic growth, with an average annual GDP growth rate exceeding 10% over the last decade. This growth has been supported by investments in infrastructure such as roads, railways, and energy projects, which have facilitated economic diversification and industrialization.

Agriculture remains a crucial sector, employing a large portion of the population and contributing significantly to GDP. The government has implemented policies to improve agricultural productivity, such as providing subsidies for inputs and promoting modern farming techniques.

Ethiopia has pursued a strategy of industrialization, aiming to transform from an agrarian economy to a more diversified industrial base. Industrial parks have been established across the country to attract foreign investment, promote manufacturing, and create employment opportunities.

Infrastructure development has been a cornerstone of Ethiopia's economic progress. Projects like the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) on the Blue Nile River and various road and railway projects have aimed to improve connectivity within the country and

with neighboring regions.

Progress has been made in improving social indicators such as education and healthcare. The government has invested in expanding access to education and healthcare services, particularly in rural areas.

Despite these advances, Ethiopia faces challenges including inflationary pressures, corruption, political instability in some regions, and the need for continued economic reforms. Efforts are ongoing to address these challenges and create a more conducive environment for sustainable economic growth.

Ethiopia has actively sought foreign investment, particularly in sectors like manufacturing, agriculture, and infrastructure. Government incentives and the establishment of industrial zones have aimed to attract foreign capital and technology transfer.

The source of government derives finance from local and international sources. Its local income is levying tax while it obtains finance from bilateral and multilateral sources in the form of loan and grant. As mentioned above the government tax base as compared to other African countries it is tiny and its tax GDP ratio is small.

Therefore, enhancing the tax base is essential and so far the government has been taking various measures to broaden its tax bases and some encouraging results are obtained but as compared to the need it is insignificant.

Ethiopia is rich in natural resources such as arable lands, forest, surface and underground water, minerals, livestock and others but due to lack of sufficient finance, technology and skilled human resources, it is not exploited fully and its contribution to the economy is insignificant. In addition the underdevelopment of infrastructure such as roads and institutions paved the way for sizable number of livestock found its way to the neighboring countries market. As the result, the revenue that could be obtained through tax will be drained to the unknown destiny in the clandestine manner.

Due to the rampant corruption and irresponsible practices, other commodities particularly agricultural products and mines smuggled from Ethiopia to the outside world which again left the nation with no revenue generation. Had the commodities been exported in the formal channel, they would have been boosting the government coffers and more development projects would have been implemented. Therefore the ongoing measures that have been taken to broaden the tax base should be strengthened.

Art & Culture

Reggae as a musical genre of resistance

(Bob Marley, Part I)

BY SOLEYANA BEKELE
(Journalist from America)

One year after the assassination attempt of Bob Nesta Marley, *Exodus*, a defining work of Bob Marley & The Wailers' career, was released. Though popular worldwide for mainstream tracks such as "Three Little Birds" and "One Love," among reggae fans, *Exodus* is known for its artistry and musical choices. The regular version of *Exodus* has ten tracks. In vinyl, the first five are on one side and the other five on the opposite. The first five songs are probably some of the serious and sterner tracks Marley had produced at this point in his career (*Survival* doesn't come out until 1979). The other five, however, shift the entire tone of the album with light-hearted melodies and beats with serenading tracks like "Waiting In Vain." To understand Marley's musical choices in the creation of the legendary *Exodus*, it would be most useful to go track by track and explore the distinct choices that made *Exodus* one of the greatest reggae albums of all time.

"Natural Mystic"

The album opens with "Natural Mystic," a song that almost sounds like its creeping up at you from the unknown. It begins with the classic reggae strum of the guitar as well as the steady, enveloping bass of Aston "Family man" Barrett's guitar. As it continues to get louder (for a full 25 seconds), the drums introduce Bob Marley's voice, and he sings "there's a natural mystic blowing through the air." This bar sets the rather dark tone of the rest of the song and the first half of the whole album. Marley continues with this ominous tone with lyrics like "many more will have to suffer, many more will have to die," as well as references to the trumpet of the end of days with "if you listen carefully you will hear, this could be the first trumpet, might as well be the last."

As a revolutionary reggae artist, Bob Marley's "Natural Mystic" could be reference to the coming revolution that could lead to the many more that would have to suffer and die. Marley could also be referring to the political violence that gripped Jamaica because of the 1976 elections, in which the Jamaican Labour Party (JLP), under Edward Seaga, and the People's National Party (PNP), under Michael Manley, fought for dominion. This was the same political violence that led to the attempt at Bob Marley's life in the confines of his home at 56 Hope Road. Bob Marley's previous message of peace and love seemed a threat to those who wanted to control Jamaican politics. And "Natural Mystic" was, in part, a warning of the nature of violence.

"So Much Things To Say"

"So Much Things To Say" starts off with the classic upbeat reggae rhythm introduced by the drums. Though musically it may seem a shift from the stern tone established by "Natural Mystic," the lyrics prove different. Marley repeats the line "they got so much things to say," possibly in reference to the Rastafarian-based bi-



ases that began to follow him and his band mates around as they toured the world. As one of the first mainstream Rasta artists from Jamaica in the 1970s, Marley introduced Rastafarianism to the world through his music. Though some embraced it, there were a lot more who rejected, if not downright ridiculed, the Rastafarian faith. Most people understand Rastafarianism through surface-level analyses: believing Haile Selassie I to be God come again, the locking of one's hair, and the spiritual usage of ganja (weed). Though this is not untrue, it would be doing the entire Rastafarian faith a disservice to solely understand it through this lens.

Rastafarians are a devout and disciplined people who take the healthy maintenance of their body, soul, and environment incredibly seriously. It takes discipline and devotion to the betterment of you and the world around you to be a true Rastafarian. Marley continues by mentioning Jamaican revolutionaries like Marcus Garvey, founder of the United Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) and Paul Bogle, executed for rebelling against the British govt. in Jamaica (1865) by singing "I'll never forget, no way, the way they turned their back on Paul Bogle...the way they sold Marcus Garvey for rights." Marley continues by urging listeners "don't forget who you are and where you stand in the struggle." Among the confusion and miss education that is unleashed upon Africans by the venomous Babylon system, it is of utmost importance that Africans know who they are—know the difference between who truly fought for them and those who continue to plot our demise. Among this disarray, Marley reminds listeners to not expect liberation through the constructs of men: "I and I nah expect to be justified by the laws of men." And that when the revolution comes, these constructs will not be there to protect anyone, despite the protections a certain caste or class might offer: "when the rain falls, it won't fall on one man's housetop."

Overall, "So Much Things to Say" continues the tone established by "Natural Mystic" by warning and urging listeners of the forces that killed Africans like Paul Bogle and Marcus Garvey that were truly about the liberation of their people. Marley urges listeners to stay true to where they came from—their roots—because all the "things they have to say" is to the utmost detriment of Africans anywhere.

"Guiltiness"

"Guiltiness" begins with the same low, ominous tone first established by "Natural Mystic," and grows even more so ominous with the lyrics. Marley begins with the line "Guiltiness, pressed on their conscience, they live a life of false pretense every day." Upon first listen, one might surmise that Marley is speaking of the bourgeoisie, but this line of thought is solidified with the following line, "these are the big fish, who try to eat down the small fish;" and continues with "they would do anything to materialize their every wish." The use of the word "material,"—if not the vivid picture painted by Marley—seems to refer to the capitalist system in which the bourgeoisie (the big fish) survive by feeding on the labor of the working class (the small fish).

The chorus of "Guiltiness," however, is a proclamation—a threat, if you will—for Marley sings "woe to the downpressors" for "they eat the bread of sorrow."

"Guiltiness" is one of the most militant songs of Bob Marley's career for not only does he characterize the inherent vulture-like aspect of capitalism with the "big fish/small fish" analogy, but he also proclaims woe—"great sorrow and distress"—on the downpressors (oppressors).

"The Heathen"

"The Heathen" continues and amplifies the militant tone by starting the song off with vocals from Marley and the I-Three chanting "the heathen back dey 'pon the wall." This chanting style of singing further emphasizes the warning and militant tone that Marley is so clearly trying to create with the first half of the album. "The Heathen" is also the first track in which there is little to no musical variance in terms of chords and tone progression. It is the same beat over and over again with flares of the guitar here and there. Marley also adds a certain roughness to his voice by utilizing lower octaves when chanting. This, again, may be done to create a specific sound and aesthetic that Marley is going for.

This artistic choice is reinforced with the lyrics as most of the song is comprised by the chorus "the heathen back dey 'pon the wall." It is also important to note that "The Heathen" is the first track in *Exodus* that deviates from the reggae formula slightly and incorporates more rock elements. This may simply be an aesthetic choice, but it

could also be done to emphasize the militant side of Marley best exemplified by the lines "rise up fallen fighters, rise and take your stance again!"

"Exodus"

"Exodus," for which the album is named after, is the longest song with 7 minutes and 39 seconds long. It marks the halfway point before the album completely switches gears. I like to think of it as a really lengthy interlude but calling it an interlude would be doing it a disservice as its musical and political significance is evident.

"Exodus" starts with the classic reggae skanking by the lead guitar, which is met with the bass, the keyboards, and "one drop" drum rhythm to create the warm sound ready for Marley and I-Three's "Exodus! Movement of Jah people!" This beat is sustained by the steady beat of the bass drums as well as the light hi-hats.

Marley's proclamation of "we're leaving Babylon, we're goin' to our father's land," coupled with shouts of "move!" here and there adds to the urgent tone Marley is creating. Much like "The Heathen" this is a militant and political song—calling for Africans to forsake and leave the vampire that is Babylon (the West). Marley also sings "we know where we're going, we know where we're from." It is important to note that the PNP under Manley used the phrase "We Know Where We Are Going" for their campaign in '76. Marley's clever retort of "we know where we're from" is in reference to Africa—the homeland.

"Exodus" can be interpreted in a number of ways. For some, it may symbolize the physical return to Africa. For others, it is more of a "return to Africa" mindset in the way one lives and thinks. Regardless, "Exodus" has the perfect musical choices that one can't help but feel the need to get up and literally move—as Marley urges multiple times throughout the song.

Whether it is to get whoever is listening to actually get up and dance or, more likely, urge Africans worldwide to 'leave' Babylon in any capacity, "Exodus" is a quintessential roots reggae track that was a defining force in developing the militant side of reggae as a whole.

"Jamming"

The first lighthearted, feel-good song of the *Exodus*, "Jamming" marks the complete shift from the dark tone established between tracks 1-4. "Jamming" is almost meta in the sense that Marley is highlighting the beauty of, and defending the right to, jamming—as he puts it—to great music.

Though this track marks the shift to less-serious topics, Marley has lines that are possibly allusions to his assassination attempt: "no bullet can stop us now, we neither beg nor we won't bow, neither can't be bought nor sold."

Overall, "Jamming" is significant in being the first song in the album that marks the deviation from existential and political questions posed in "Natural Mystic" through "Exodus."

Science & Technology

Promoting nuclear science and technology for peaceful development in Africa

BY DARGIE KAHSAY

Nuclear science and technology is promoting development endeavors in various countries. It helps developing countries to reduce poverty and hunger, to generate clean energy, to manage water resources, to cope with climate change and to treat diseases like cancer. Considering the role of nuclear science and technology in development activities especially in accelerating development efforts of developing countries, African countries are introducing the applications of nuclear science and technology in various fields to promote their economic developments.

Speaking to *The Ethiopian Herald*, Chief Executive Chairman of Nigeria Atomic Energy Commission and AFRA National Coordinator for Nigeria, Professor Amin Ahmed stated that the introduction of nuclear science and technology will promote the development of various fields. As to him, nuclear applications are critically important for the development of agriculture, human health, water resource management, industry, environmental protection and other fields that are backbones of the Africa's economic development endeavors.

As to him, considering the role of nuclear science and technology for economic development of the continent, the Africa Regional Cooperative Agreement for Research, Development and Training related to Nuclear Science and Technology (AFRA) is striving for the development of nuclear science and technology in the continent. *The Ethiopian Herald* met Professor Amin in Addis Ababa while he was attending the 35th AFRA Technical Working Group Meeting.

According to Professor Amin, nuclear science and technology is crucial for the development of agriculture and the health sectors especially for the developing countries struggling for the development of the sectors. For example, post-harvest loss of agricultural products is among the major issues across Africa. As to Professor Amin, by utilizing nuclear technology radiation facilities, it could be possible to contend the post-harvest loss of agricultural products. "AFRA realized that through utilizing nuclear technology, Africa can increase the shelf life of its agricultural products," he noted.

Similarly, Professor Amin stated, nuclear science and technology is crucial in the medical field. The application of nuclear technology in the medical field is vital for radio therapy and radio diagnoses in the health sector. Hence, as to him, nuclear science and technology has managed to fight cancer and other diseases in the field of health. For the development of these sectors, AFRA has many regional projects working closely with all member states.



Participants of the 35th AFRA Technical Working Group Meeting here in Addis Ababa

"We are working very well at AFRA through the AFRA Fund to support regional nuclear science and technology projects and applications in various fields. All member states within AFRA have functional regional projects and the AFRA will continue its efforts for the development of nuclear science and technology applications for peaceful economic development in Africa" Professor Amin stated.

While opening the 35th AFRA Technical Working Group Meeting on Tuesday, Belete Molla (PhD), Minister of Innovation and Technology (MInT) of Ethiopia for his part stated that Ethiopia is working closely with AFRA for the development of nuclear science and technology for development endeavors in Africa. In addition using the nuclear science and technology applications in various fields, as to the minister, Ethiopia is taking practical measures to establish nuclear science and technology center to produce electricity from nuclear energy.

According to Belete, Ethiopia is exploring the potential of nuclear power for electricity generation and will establish an institute to sustainably manage the sector. "We are investing in research and development, constructing the necessary infrastructure and developing policies and programs to support innovative business and entrepreneurs in all sectors. The Ministry of Innovation and Technology is hence dedicated to promoting the peaceful use of nuclear energy in creating robust and sustainable nuclear program," the minister stated.

Belete stated nuclear science and technology is important for the development of key economic sectors in developing countries. Using nuclear science and technology, as to him, is important in food security, agriculture, human health, water resource management, environment, industry and more recently in research. The Minister further stated that Ethiopia is one of the founding states

of AFRA and has become a party to AFRA since its establishment in 1990. The AFRA is helping member states to elevating the technical collaborations among state parties and with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and also in funding projects in the sector.

Ethiopia will continue strengthening its cooperation with AFRA and member states for the development of nuclear science and technology for peaceful development in Africa, Belete stated adding Ethiopia will take the chairmanship of the AFRA next year.

The Ethiopian Herald posed a question for Professor Amin on the necessity of using nuclear science and technology to produce energy. As to him, Nuclear Science and Technology has many applications and energy is among the applications. Nuclear science is one of clean energy sources and he promotes the development of nuclear technology for energy production in developing countries.

"Nuclear technology can provide clean and sustainable energy using nuclear power plant. African countries have shown interests in using nuclear energy for electricity" Professor Amin noted. He appreciates the development and use of nuclear energy to produce electricity as it helps countries to produce clean and sustainable energy. In this regard, he recommends African countries to cooperate with international partners to be able to develop the capacity of nuclear power plants in Africa.

As to him, all other energy sources of energy will prove expensive in the long run, except nuclear and hydro power energies. Though hydropower is ideal to produce energy as it uses water to generate electricity which is also comparably cheap, it needs availability of water bodies. But, it is not all African countries that have water bodies. Hence, to produce sustainable clean energy source, it is important to consider nuclear energy.

"Electricity from nuclear energy runs for more than eighty years which makes the source among clean energy sources that can provide services for long years."

AFRA National Coordinator for Ethiopia, Abeba Getu, for her part stated that AFRA is working for the development of nuclear science and technology for development endeavors in Africa mainly in health, agriculture, industry, research and other areas where nuclear radiation and application is necessary. As to her, AFRA provides financial and technical supports for its member states for the development of using nuclear science and technology in the development fields across the member states and various regional projects are being implemented by AFRA.

As to her, Ethiopia has around 29 regional projects working with AFRA. For the realization of these projects, AFRA provides financial support, equipment supply, training for human resource development and other technical supports for its member states. AFRA helps in building laboratory facilities in health centers and higher education institutions and provide trainings for human resource development in the nuclear science and technology sector including long term trainings. It also introduces new applications and technologies for the member states to accelerate the development efforts of the countries.

By strengthening the cooperation among the member states of AFRA and strengthening the bond with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the African continent have to exploit the development potential of the nuclear science and technology industry. In addition, the continent has to focus on human resource development and promoting local efforts in the sector so as to realize and develop the contribution of the sector in the continent's development endeavors.

Society

The young Ethiopian volunteer

BY TEWODROS KASSA

Bethlehem Asfaw, 17, was born in Addis Ababa. However, when she turned two years old, she travelled to Virginia, USA where she was nurtured and grew up in quite discipline and unparalleled love to her families and all humans.

Bethlehem got the opportunity to practice voluntarism when she was a 3rd grade student at the time the school picked a few students to participate in the school club. Luckily, she became one of the students who got the chance to be a member of the club. At that time, she and other club members used to write best wishes cards as gifts to patients in hospitals. The cards had the power in creating emotional attachment and sense of belongings with the patients; which in turn helped them a lot to feel better physically and psychologically, she recalls.

At that time, she started to understand the impacts of voluntarism on individual citizens and how it will influence their lives positively and meaningfully.

While she was fully aware of the positive impacts of volunteerism, and the benefits it offers to the needy, Bethlehem came to Ethiopia in 2016 for vacation after eight years abroad. She was only ten years old at that time. However, being at her younger age never impeded her from understanding the challenges faced by many of the unfortunate and disadvantaged sections of the community who were struggling with deprivations. Thus, she promised for herself to do whatever she can; support the needy thereby make a positive contribution to her fellowmen.

In an exclusive interview with *The Ethiopian Herald*, Bethlehem said that she felt heartbroken while watching some mothers and children facing challenges in life, here. Since then, she frequently contemplates how to extend a helping hand for the deprived ones, improve their lives and brighten their future. At that time, she told her mother and father about the possibilities of changing those individual's circumstances.

"I have to do something. I have to change this scenario. But, I am still young and do not have sufficient money to lend hands to numerous people. So, what can I do?" she asked her parents.

After returning to the USA from vacation, she developed her own website in December, 2021. Now, the website is well-developed, envisioning mobilizing funds and various supports to the needy in her motherland. She hosted various fundraising and go-fund me campaigns that enabled her to realize the dream of creating a shiny future for numerous children in Ethiopia.

As soon as opening the go-fund me page, she mobilized more than 6,000 USD. Then, she came back to Ethiopia in June, 2022 to provide various in-kind supports to the Internally Displaced People (IDPs), mainly children, sheltered in Debre



Bethlehem Asfaw

Berhan Town and for Zeghie Primary School in Bahir Dar, Amhara State.

She provided various sanitary materials to more than 200 girls in Debre Birhan. Apart from this, she provided about 1,000 reference books and other educational materials to Zeghie Primary School.

In 2023, she established a youth volunteers club in Virginia and provided permanent financial, in-kind, medical and other support to 11 Ethiopian children in collaboration with 'Yifat Development Association.' By coordinating 40 Ethio-American students to donate 10 USD per month, she has enabled needy children in Ethiopia to pursue their education.

Moreover, the club members actively participate in different events related to promoting Ethiopian culture and history. In addition, the members share experiences like leadership and communications skills.

This year, Bethlehem provided various in-kind supports to 'Sile Enat Charitable Organization' in Addis Ababa after mobilizing supporters and volunteers for a GoFundMe platform and holding a fundraiser event. She also provided financial support to the women to start business after being given training by the organization.

Currently, Bethlehem finalized her grade 12th education. She plans to study business and finance at the University of North Carolina at Chappell Hill. She also aspires to widen her fund raising activities through utilizing connections opportunities at the University.

Bethlehem is also a patriotic girl who loves her country more than anything. Words are not enough to explain her feelings for Ethiopia. She also believes that Ethiopia would position to its former greatness very soon.

"I want to see my country transforming to a more developed country like other nations. Ethiopia has immense potential to grow and prosper. Of course, there are problems here and there. However, the country managed to overcome so many challenges including the Italian invasion. The Victory of Adwa is a living monument for African independence that shines forever. Therefore, the new generation is expected to elevate the country and position it to a better future," she said.



Bethlehem provided in-kind support for Sile Enat Charitable Organization

In the future, Bethlehem desires to expand her voluntarism activities beyond border through working with various worldwide known philanthropic individuals and organizations. Parallel to this, she wants to work for the United Nations (UN) or United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) after graduation.

"I am very happy and thankful for everything. God has blessed me with energy and motivation. I am grateful to spreading love and compassion to others. Everywhere I go, people extend to me unparalleled love, admiration, and provide me with unreserved support for volunteering works that I am engaged in now. This motivated me to further my efforts. I am busy as I engage in various activities beyond my education."

According to her, voluntarism should not be done for any other goals; rather it should come from the heart. The government should also promote voluntarism and the customs process should be flexible while importing goods intended for humanitarian support.

She finally advises young Ethiopians to be problem-solvers, practice voluntarism, and explore their passion in their future endeavors.

"Do something you are passionate about and do what you love to do. You will work hard while you are doing your passion and become successful finally," she noted.

Bethlehem's mother Simret Terefe witnessed that being nurtured through fulfilling God's commandments and reading the Holy Book since earlier in six years of age has enabled her daughter to be benevolent to others and motivated to actively participate in voluntarism.

"Basically, she generated the idea of engaging in voluntarism by herself. We are always by her side as a parent. I am happy to see my daughter performing well both academically and in social life," she added.

On her part, Program Director with Sile Enat Charitable Organization, Kalkidan Teshager said that the organization

provides sustainable support to the needy children through involving various volunteers and other organizations.

According to her, the organization facilitates ways to create a better future for Ethiopian children through adoption and delegating to other families.

Moreover, the organization is now providing permanent support to 38 children and facilitated support to more than 200 children through community-based schemes.

"Recently, Bethlehem visited our organization and provided various in-kind support including food-items, educational and sanitary materials, among others. Thus, her effort is admirable and other youths should also follow her footsteps," she said.

In Ethiopia, volunteering plays a crucial role in promoting social cohesion, community development, and personal growth. It offers young individuals the opportunity to contribute positively to society while developing valuable skills and gaining hands-on experience.

Accordingly, participating in voluntarism activities offers a range of benefits. It allows volunteers to expand their social networks, meet like-minded individuals, and form meaningful relationships. It also provides opportunities for personal growth and self-discovery, as individuals step out of their comfort zones and take on new challenges.

In sum, promoting young Ethiopians to engage in volunteerism is essential for fostering a sense of social responsibility, building stronger communities, and empowering the next generation of leaders. By encouraging young individuals to participate in volunteer works, it is possible to create a more inclusive and compassionate society where everyone has the opportunity to thrive. Thus, let's continue to inspire and support young Ethiopians to take part in voluntary works thereby making a difference in country's overall progress.

International News

Africa states turn to information exchange to boost tax revenues

EOI requests are appeals by a country's tax authority to another for disclosure of data on the financial accounts, assets held or income earned by their citizens in foreign countries.

Amid increasing fiscal pressures and debt sustainability in African countries, governments are now making use of exchange of information agreements available to them more than ever.

Last year, the amount of tax revenue raised by countries on the continent from exchange on information (EOI) requests increased steeply from \$71.5 million in 2022 to hit \$2.3 billion, the highest level in over 10 years, according to the Tax Transparency in Africa Report 2024 published by the Africa Initiative last week.

This was a result of increased use of EOI and automatic exchange of information (AEOI) between countries to net tax cheats stashing money and other assets in offshore accounts to evade taxes in their home countries.

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In 2023, the number of exchange of information requests sent to other jurisdictions around the globe by African countries increased by 67 percent to 888, up from only 531 in 2022.

Exchange of information requests are appeals by a country's tax authority to another country for disclosure of data on the financial accounts, assets held or income earned by their citizens in foreign countries.

Traditionally, African countries have utilized the avenues available for such EOI arrangements much less than others. The request Africa has received over the years has been significantly larger than those they sent, highlighting their slow adoption of the agreements.

Latest data from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) reveals that most African countries are expected to narrow their fiscal deficits this year, which will only be made possible if tax revenues increase as their headroom for more borrowing has also grown small.

On average, the budget deficit for the continent is expected to slim to 3.7 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) this year, from about 4.1 percent last year and 4.4 percent in 2022.

At the same time, the IMF expects the continent's average debt-to-GDP ratio to drop



from 60.1 percent in 2023 to 58.5 percent in 2024, an indication that most countries will be taming their appetite or debt financing this year compared to previous years.

But these projections by the multilateral lender appears to have put more and more countries on the continent to raise tax revenues as other sources of financing, including aid from richer countries, have also been on a downward trajectory in most countries.

In the region, countries appear to be overstretching their limits to raise more money from domestic revenue mobilization efforts. Kenya, for instance, last year introduced a raft of new taxes that were expected to lift its ordinary revenues from Ksh2 trillion (\$15.4 billion) in the 2022/23 financial year to Ksh2.6

trillion (\$20 billion) in the current financial year.

In the coming financial year, Nairobi expects additional tax measures to generate at least Ksh324 billion (\$2.5 billion), raising its total tax revenues to Ksh2.9 trillion (\$22.3 billion).

In Uganda, the government has introduced several new tax measures for the coming 2024/25 financial year, intended to raise tax revenue by Ush1.9 trillion (\$488 million) to fund the Ush58.3 trillion budget for the coming year.

Other countries in the region are also exploring new ways to raise tax revenues to finance their coming year's budgets, and the EOI approach seems to be gaining momentum amongst them.

Source: The East African



This is Ethiopia

Steps to harness Dine for Ethiopia projects' tourism potentials

BY TEWODROS KASSA

The future of tourism in Ethiopia is bright, with significant potential for expansion and development. Dine for Ethiopia projects, among others, are paving the way for a thriving tourism industry by showcasing the country's vast potentials.

It is obvious that to ensure sustained growth, innovation and strategic planning are essential in the tourism sector. In this regard, 'Dine for Ethiopia' projects are at the forefront of this effort, continuously exploring new ways to attract visitors, enhance experiences, and promote sustainability.

In Ethiopia, sustainable tourism practices are crucial for protecting the country's breathtaking natural beauty. From the lush highlands to the rugged landscapes, initiatives like Dine for Ethiopia prioritize environmental conservation. By promoting eco-friendly tourism activities and advocating for responsible travel practices, these projects help safeguard Ethiopia's precious ecosystems for future generations to enjoy aside from generating considerable economic benefits for the local people, the states where the resources are located and the country as well; while minimizing negative impacts on the environment.

Recently, with the aim to improve service quality, boost efficiency and enhance the tourism experience in Ethiopia by utilizing Ethiopian Airlines Group's expertise in the hospitality industry, the Ethiopian Airlines signed agreements with states to enable the former carry out the management and operation activities of the lodges and resorts that are built under the Dine for Ethiopia projects thereby ensuring consistent growth and development. The Skylight Hotel of the Ethiopian Airlines Group will henceforth manage the lodges and resorts built through Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) initiative.

Those lodges and resorts were transferred to the states in a ceremony held at the Office of the Prime Minister; and during the signing ceremony the states in turn signed agreements with the Airlines that would manage the lodges and resorts.

Ethiopian Airlines Group CEO Mesfin Tasew said on the occasion that tourism and air transport are interlinked and the Airlines has been working to stimulate tourism in Ethiopia. The Skylight Hotel owned by the Airlines has been providing standard hospitality services for visitors.

"Ethiopian has been working to expand this service to the states, and the agreements have fulfilled the long-term dream of the Airline."

The CEO confirmed that the agreements combine good fortune with responsibility and visitors will have a comfortable stay in the international standard hotel services.

Tourism Minister Nasise Chali said that the lodges and resorts handed over to the Ethiopian Airlines would help maintain quality service, which would set an example for service



Wonchi crater lake



providers.

The Minister added that it is a great opportunity to raise the quality of the country's tourism and hotel services and build the image of the country. According to her, the Chebera Churchura Park, situated in Southwest Ethiopia Region, had not attracted tourists as much as it should due to the lack of infrastructure. However, thanks to the infrastructures established under the Dine for Ethiopia initiative, the Park is now fully prepared to receive visitors from various corners of the globe, allowing them to marvel at the breathtaking scenery of the State, Nasise underscored.

The construction of Chebera Elephant Paw Lodge adheres to environmentally friendly principles, offering a comfortable and contemporary retreat for tourists to enjoy the picturesque surroundings.

Nasise expressed that this serves as a clear indication of the government's commitment to developing tourist destinations that showcase the country's natural beauty while ensuring the

preservation of nature remains a top priority.

She revealed that numerous other tourist destinations are currently being developed as part of the "Dine for Generation" projects throughout the country. The Minister emphasized that these upcoming tourist destinations will play a crucial role in enhancing Ethiopia's image and reputation on the global stage.

Office of the Prime Minister Head and Cabinet Affairs Minister, Alemtsehay Paulos also said that the Dine for Nation program has proven that it is possible to identify and use the potentials that the country has in each area.

The effectiveness of the initiative has created opportunities for other projects to be realized, she said, pointing out that the agreements will help revive the tourism sector by providing services that meet international standards.

Alemtsehay urged states to continue strengthening the cooperation they have shown in the construction process of the projects.

Office of the Prime Minister Press Secretary Head, Billene Seyoum said on her part that

Dine for Nation has given great experience in involving people in development.

Apart from providing access for many infrastructures, the projects have demonstrated how to complete any project with quality and speed, she added.

Accordingly, harnessing the tourism potentials of Dine for Ethiopia projects could be the key to unlocking a successful tourism strategy. To maximize the impact of Dine for Ethiopia projects, it is essential to collaborate with other tourism stakeholders, such as tour operators, hotels, and travel agencies.

Moreover, harnessing the tourism potentials of Dine for Ethiopia projects requires a strategic approach that emphasizes collaboration, promotion, and cultural experiences. By implementing robust policy and strategies, it is easy to create compelling tourism offerings that showcase the best of Ethiopian natural and man-made blessings.

It is to be recalled that Halala Kella Resort, Chebera Elephant Paw Lodge, Wonchi Eco Tourism, and Gorgora have been built in Dawuro Zone of South West Ethiopia, Oromia and Amhara states, respectively.

In sum, the Dine for Ethiopia projects exemplify the power of tourism to not only tantalize taste buds and captivate travelers but also to drive positive change and empower communities. As Ethiopia's tourism sector continues to evolve and flourish fueled by a commitment to sustainability and cultural preservation, the potential for growth and development in this vibrant destination is limitless. By supporting initiatives that celebrate Ethiopia's unique identity and foster responsible travel practices, it is possible to play a part in nurturing a more inclusive, prosperous, and culturally rich tourism landscape for generations to come. By embracing innovation and implementing effective strategies, the future of tourism in Ethiopia looks promising, with exciting opportunities on the horizon for both locals and travelers alike.