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Premier reveals goal to reach 40 bln seedlings

• *Forest cover increases by 6.4 percent in 5 years*

BY STAFF REPORTER

ADDIS ABABA- The 2024 Green Legacy program aims to reach 40 billion seedlings, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) said, mentioning the need to plant 7.5 saplings to achieve such a goal.

The Premier made the above remark during the 2024 Green Legacy pre-launch program held at the Office of the Prime Minister on Friday.

Noting this year's Green Legacy Program will be held under the principle of 'A Planting Country, A Sustainable Generation,' Abiy (PhD) indicated that planting and nurturing seedlings is the responsibility of the current generation. "From this point of view, everyone who wants to leave a good country for their children should invest by planting saplings today."

"If we do not plant and take care of our soil resources today, we may reach a point

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Universities initiate research-based climate change response

BY ASHENAFI ANIMUT

ADDIS ABABA – Universities have pledged to maximize research-based interventions in the national effort to tackle pressing climate change issues.

Speaking to the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA), Gondar University President Asrat Atsedewoin (PhD) said that the university is carrying out various climate related action researches in all programs and other related streamlined projects to respond to climate change thereby witnessing impactful outcomes in the area.

Among various innovative interventions, he elucidated that the university has managed to convert water hyacinth or locally known as 'Emboch' into fertilizer, biogas

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Ethiopia to launch e-Phyto system

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

ADDIS ABABA- The Ethiopian Agricultural Authority (EAA) announced preparations to digitalize agricultural products' certification processes to improve foreign trade.

Approached by *The Ethiopian Herald* the EAA Director General Dirriba Kuma said that the country has been aggressively working to launch e-Phyto system to replace the traditional manual and paper based certification process for import and export agricultural products.

The system, which is being developed with

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Mayor Adanech attributes corridor dev't success to TVET's excellence

• *City-wide TVET exhibition happens*

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

ADDIS ABABA- Applying the innovative and technological inputs of the TVET sector has played an immense role in the successful realization of the corridor development, the Addis Ababa Mayor said.

Opening the 14th City-wide Technical and Vocational Educational and Training exhibition which is being marked under the theme 'TVET for sustainable development yesterday,' Mayor Adanech Abiebie stated that the role of the TVET sector in the corridor development activities is significant.

Mentioning the prime attention that has been given to the TVET sector, she noted that the attention is paying off in accelerating Ethiopia's economic progress. Due emphasis has also been given to allow the sector to come up with new technology and adopt various technologies from different countries.



The TVET is a sector that could drive innovation, skill, and technology that is meaningfully contributing to Ethiopia in different aspects. Besides technological and innovative advancement, it is saving huge amounts of foreign currency through import substitution.

Nonetheless, she stressed that much more work is required to not only substitute imports but also engage in attracting foreign currency through exports. To this end, put in a place seamless market linkage is critical.

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Boosting industrial investment pivotal to achieve trade balance: IPDC

BY MESERET BEHAILU

ADDIS ABABA – Intensifying efforts to boost local and foreign investment in the industry sector is imperative to realize balance of trade, said the Industrial Parks Development Corporation (IPDC).

IPDC CEO, Aklilu Tadesse told the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that the reformist government has been working to achieve trade balance through boosting industrial production with the active engagement of local and foreign investors.

In the past, Ethiopia had been striving to maximize export while paying less attention to import substitution. Consequently, domestic investors had not played a significant role in country's economy mainly in the industrial sector that's why close to 94 % of the sector run by foreign investors over the past many years, he indicated.

"Particularly, the government initiated the domestic investors by providing facilitated areas which has green spaces, asphalt, one stop services, power line, and water and sewerage system."

He also called on foreign investors to come to Ethiopia and utilize country's investment opportunities.

Chernet Gebremeskel (MD) from the Medical Glove Manufacturing PLC, said that alluring domestic investors is crucial to boost the economy.

"I have allocated over 160 million Birr to run business and planned to produce international standard quality medical glove in the years to come," he expressed.

According to Chernet, lack of medical glove is a serious challenge in Ethiopia in particular and the African continent in general. Therefore, substituting the product locally plays a significant role in addressing foreign currency glitches.

Chinese automaker weighs Ethiopia's car market

•Delivers 100 heavy trucks to local firm

BY YESUF ENDRIS

ADDIS ABABA- The Chinese leading commercial vehicle manufacturer and supplier, Foton Motor revealed a plan to supply more commercial trucks and electric vehicles (EV) to the Ethiopian market.

The company delivered 100 heavy trucks and signed a strategic partnership agreement with the Ethiopian East Africa Holding Company yesterday.

Speaking at the occasion, Foton Motor Chairperson Chang Rui said that Ethiopia is one of the company's strategic destinations. Foton's global outreach is increasing from time to time and it is currently operating in over 130 countries.

"We are a top commercial vehicle manufacturer in China and one of the largest manufacturers and suppliers to the world. Ethiopia, with growing economy, also demands such vehicles. So, we will continue supplying our products to Ethiopia including electric vehicles."



With a robust network of over 1,000 overseas distributors and 1,200 service centers, Foton has established itself as a dominant player in key markets, including Ethiopia.

According to the chairperson, Foton Motor is committed for further investment in the Ethiopian market and to strengthen partnerships with local stakeholders. "Foton's presence in Ethiopia is set to grow, contributing to the nation's economic

growth and infrastructure development."

The delivery of 100 heavy trucks to East Africa Holding also signifies the company's deeper penetration into the Ethiopian market and a significant step in its global industrial strategy. The company plans to start localized production in Ethiopia, offering a full range of commercial vehicles to enhance transport efficiency and support regional economic development, it was stated in the occasion.

Germany supports Ethiopia's skateboarding community

BY EYUEL KIFLU

ADDIS ABABA- Sports have an incredible power to bring people together across different backgrounds and unite them around a common purpose, so said German ambassador.

Germany has provided Ethiopia's Skateboarding Community with donation comprising much-needed high-quality skate equipment, complete boards, helmets, protectors, colorful skateboard decks, and small equipment for skateboards like trucks.

Speaking at a handover ceremony held yesterday to celebrate the donation of skateboarding equipment from Germany to the Ethiopia Skate community, Ferdinand von Weyhe, the Chargé d'Affaires at the German Embassy in Addis Ababa said that the development of the skateboarding park in Ethiopia is a true community effort. He further noted that it is not just those in positions of responsibility, but a joint undertaking by many people. The ambassador was impressed to see so many individuals, even in difficult circumstances, working together with a common vision to build the park in Ethiopia.

He highlighted that this effort brings together people from Ethiopia and abroad, showing a strong community spirit and shared goal. He saw this as an inspiring example of people-to-people cooperation, going beyond just political or economic discussions with Ethiopia and German.

"Sports have an incredible power to bring



people together across different backgrounds and unite them around a common purpose," the ambassador remarked. "As the German ambassador, I'm particularly excited about the clear connections I saw between Germany and Ethiopia in this project. The German school involvement, the skaters coming from Germany - it's a wonderful example of international cooperation and cultural exchange through a shared love of skating," he added.

The ambassador expressed admiration for the passion and creativity of the local skaters, recounting anecdotes of seeing them make their own skateboards and perform daring stunts. "I saw this as demonstrating a true love for the sport that transcends backgrounds and brings people together," he opined.

In an exclusive interview with *The Ethiopian Herald* Abenezer Temesgen, one of the

founders of the Ethiopian Skate Community and the vice-president of the Addis Ababa Skateboarding Association on his part shared the remarkable journey of introducing and growing the skateboarding scene in Ethiopia. Thirteen years ago, Abenezer and his friends started skateboarding in their neighborhood, teaching themselves through YouTube videos, as there were no experienced skaters to guide them.

Despite the challenges, the Ethiopian skateboarding community has made significant strides. They have represented the country in competitions abroad, and their ultimate goal is to participate in the Olympics, representing Ethiopia in the sport. Currently, there are over 2,000 skaters in Ethiopia, making the country the second-largest skate sport hub in Africa, following South Africa.

Editorial

Sustainable, fruitful green legacy

Climate change that resulted from reckless tree felling which in turn created desertification has long been a threat to mankind as it resulted in ozone layer depletion that exposed human beings to ultraviolet rays. For want of carbon sinks that absorb the carbon dioxide by the industrialized countries and the enormity of the problem, a melancholic mood had eclipsed the world because it became no longer strange to hear about inclement weather.

Climate change is one of the formidable factors that made the global situation intangible and unpredictable. Such recurring turn of events has made the world unstable. There is no gainsaying that it is the carbon dioxide released from developed nations highly affecting the developing ones like Africa. Tragically, however the developed nations, which are industrial hubs, aloof from troubleshooting the problem, rather see it with crossed hands.

On the other side, it has been long since developing countries like Ethiopia have begun to search for lasting solutions. Apart from protecting its natural resources, Ethiopia has made tree-seedling planting a point. With the intention the green legacy movement in the country plays a troubleshooting role, over the past few years, more than 32.5 billion tree saplings have been planted. As a result, the country's tree coverage has increased from 17.2 percent five years ago to 23.6 percent now

This year a goal is set to plant over 7.5 billion seedlings thereby pushing the figure to 40 billion. It will not be as hyperbole to claim that planting tree seedlings has become a culture among citizens. Tending the trees too has turned out to be a focus of attention.

Following the climate-change cushioning work Ethiopia has undertaken, it is witnessing multifaceted palpable results taking shape. As the tree planting is handled in such a manner that edible plants are entailed in the plantation process there is a prospect that it creates a conducive situation for the country to be self-sufficient in food. The return it gets from carbon trading is increasing.

The snowballing figure of the planted saplings indicates that the country will have sustainable as well as predictable weather and climate conditions. It as well will assist the country to display. In the agriculture domain, the turnaround promises a low-hanging fruit in food self-sufficiency for the country. This astounding performance is one that allowed the country to win recognition on a global scale. At the COP-28 meeting, it exhibited a green pavilion to participants of the meeting. It has got proper name and respect. Various countries are willing to work with Ethiopia. The Dine for nation national program works underway to promote vegetables from gardens and the success that attends it show the turnaround in the green legacy movement.

The example Ethiopia set in this regard is a holy task worth replicating in Africa and the rest of the world. Also to determine the fate of our continent it is high time we aggressively engage in the green legacy or revolution.

Along with higher government officials this Week PM Abiy Ahmed (PHD), which set the ball of the legacy rolling five years ago, had officially launched this year's initial exercise of the green legacy movement. These heralds the tree planting campaign, expected to take millions aboard, has kicked off.

The PM stressed the need to see to the consolidation of the noble campaign.

Opinion

TVET's impact on socio-cultural, technological developments

BY SOLOMON DIBABA

Nobody in the world would contest the importance of technological innovations. The world is already highly tied down with technology, so much so that it is now believed that nobody can live outside and independent of technological outputs like the internet, wireless telephone lines, cell phones, computers, and countless ramifications of hardware and software technologies at the disposal of mankind.

TVET in Ethiopia is therefore meant to produce qualified experts to develop, manage, and produce technologies that are appropriate to the current and future development needs of the country.

The history of technology unquestionably surpasses the written history of mankind and that of human civilization. Technology started with the first stone implements used by Homo sapiens. Today, technology has made our planet a small village, the residents of which are easily interacting instantly.

However, technology has already attained the power to positively and negatively affect human behavior and cultural values. Trainings on the TVET level should, therefore, be based on fulfilling the needs, interests, and values of the Ethiopian population.

Although at a slower pace, Ethiopia is now exposed to modern technologies of all kinds. Despite its disconnection from the rest of the world, as Gibbon has inferred, Ethiopia's timeless technological heritages of ancient times show the extent to which technology has played a major role in partially shaping the history of this country, from the obelisks and steles of Axum to Sevastopol and to the construction of GERD.

More than 120 million Ethiopians are carrying cell phones, tablets, and all kinds of computer gadgets in their pockets and bags, receiving and disseminating information and data around the world and here in Ethiopia. TVs with satellite dishes have already become common household items even in the remotest parts of the country. TVET programs, therefore, need to be adjusted to the technological reality in the country and the rapidly changing world order.

In Ethiopia and the rest of the world, financial transactions are being processed through online computer programs that use ultramodern networking technologies. Online TV programs that present news and billions of information are already influencing the daily life of millions of Ethiopians, including children in preschools. Technical and vocational trainings in the country not only contribute to the technology and development of the country but also need to positively influence the use of appropriate technologies fit for the country and combine traditional technological skills with modern ones.

Modern computer and internet technologies

have created an online global society communicating with no restrictions whatsoever. In Ethiopia, on a much similar scale as in the rest of the world, modern technological outputs have helped the society engage in swift contacts, saving their time, energy, and to a certain extent their financial resources. TVET programs in the country need to contribute their part in producing millions of Ethiopians who can use and handle these technological innovations.

Conducting trainings on travel and tourism is one of the key areas of TVET programs in most of the world. The sector is one of the key pillars of the development program of the country, more particularly in the Ten Years Perspective Plan in the National Plan for a Home Grown national economy.

However, in Ethiopia, technological progress has seriously affected the physical-social cohesion and interaction between families and their kith and kin, friends, and acquaintances in the sense of their face-to-face encounter and physical and emotional relationship. Even high-tech innovations like Skype, video chat, and all other forms cannot compare with the traditional physical and personal meeting over a cup of traditional coffee ceremony. This implies that TVET trainings must also include the necessary moral and disciplinary standards needed to utilize these technologies.

Young people in Ethiopia are traditionally used to meeting each other on various occasions and exchanging their views and emotions. These traditional values are now replaced by chats and discussions on Facebook, WhatsApp loaded on cell phones.

These brief exchanges of information have made them victims of online conspiracy and attempts to balkanize their own country, capitalizing on the legitimate quest of the youth for change. This is why there is a need to mainstream ethical standards that would help to promote peace and unity in the country so that citizens can enjoy both home-grown and imported technological innovations.

Most young persons in the country seem to be addicted to various programs on the internet on their cell phones and cannot do anything, including basic addition, division, subtraction, and multiplication, heavily depending on calculators on their cell phones for numeracy. In the context of their social obligations, TVET graduates need to be part of resolving these challenges through peer group education.

A considerable number of youth in Ethiopia are already busy with online dating, which has become a daily event among the youth in Western and Eastern countries. Some of these dating have ended up in wedlock with either national or international partners who, in most cases, enter into married life either out of adventure or for economic needs. That is why TVET should incorporate trainings on basic social life skills.

In fact, the use of the internet with thousands

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Universities...

and other purposes. It has also made structural shifts and established a climate change research hub which help manage the climate change impacts.

Aside from green legacy initiatives, the institutions under the auspices of university are dedicatedly implementing multi sectoral national conservation chores with regard to soil conservation, water basin, restoration, energy, researches and other climate change issues.

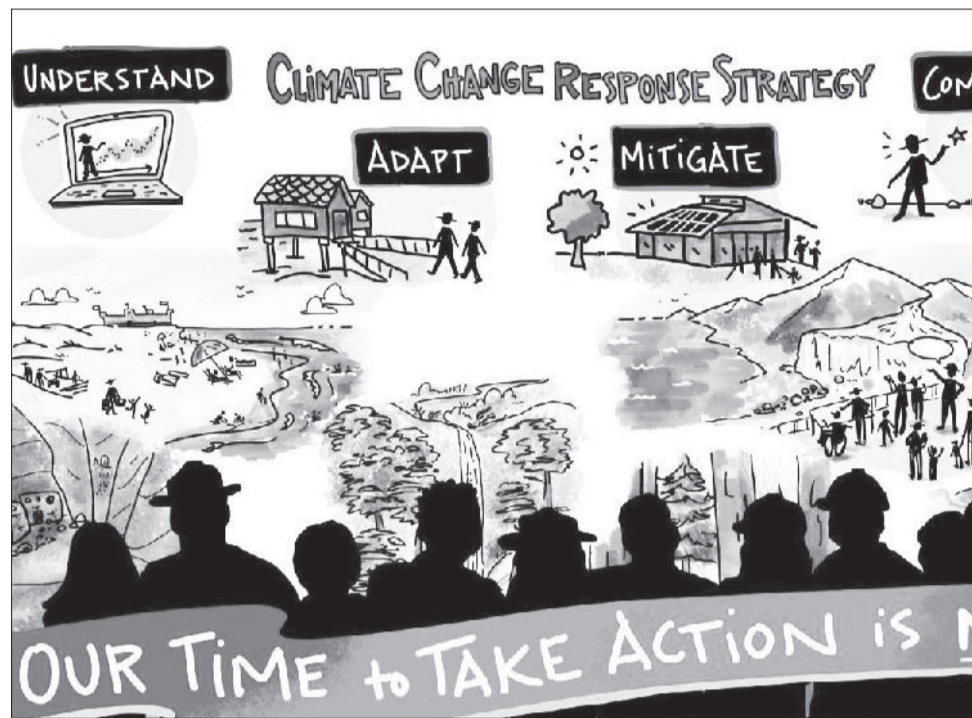
He said adding that the university is also playing its forefront role with respect to green legacy initiative by nurturing home grown nurseries in various sapling stations and dispatching to surrounding institutions for free to address the issue.

Coordination among parallel universities should be further strengthened by impactful researches in a bid to trickling down research findings and other innovative ideas meaningfully. Asrat has also called on universities to avoid conducting duplicated research works which are always kept on the shelf.

Given the global aggravating impacts of the climate issue that is posing greater impacts on the universe, Dire Dawa University President Ubah Adem (PhD) on her part stated that the university has been conducting flood mitigation research activities and range land management research findings to the administration.

Dire Dawa University is also working on solar based energy sources and technology related engagements to contribute to climate change mitigation.

As the city has been putting in place



different catchment areas, Ubah (PhD) said her university has been delivering flood mitigation findings by prioritizing problem-solving research.

The university is also creating awareness to the community, which has several farmers and pastoralists, on how to tackle flood and other natural shocks through homegrown knowledge to manage their resources.

By the same token, Bikila Workineh (PhD) from Addis Ababa University emphasized that universities should pursue both formal and informal education platforms to educate the general public and promote climate action researches.

Higher education institutions can also contribute their grate share in the national

innovation systems technology transfer, human capital development for nation's sustainable development, he added.

"Climate change response is a moral imperative of education institutions. They also need to embrace sustainable development and social responsibility agenda."

Moreover, ministries need to forge collaborations and join forces with regional and local government bodies to support climate action programs, he underscored.

It is to be recalled that scholars comprised universities and other federal pertinent representatives has recently deliberated to work on environment and climate change issues.

Ethiopia to...

a 700, 000 USD support from the European Union (EU), will be implemented in the coming five months to reduce transaction costs and delay, avoid forgery certification, among other purposes.

The system would be integrated with the national digital system especially with the Ministry of Revenue, Innovation and Technology, and Trade and Regional Integration. The EU, EAA and Trade Mark Africa have been working to replace the outdated and paper based certification processes for agricultural exports and imports, he said.

The launching of integrated export and import certification system (IEICS) or e-Phyto system requires building strategic facilities such as quarantine and laboratory centers as well as having internationally certified inspectors and others, Dirriba stated.

The system would help to know import and export volume, determine rejected products and others from the national data system electronically, he added.

He mentioned that there are quests to harmonize phytosanitary services with the EU, Asia and other countries trade systems and to revise its legal framework.

The EU and other markets have been tightening agricultural products quality inspection mechanisms due to climate change, infestation of pests among others so that the new system is being developed in compliance with this quest, according to the Director General.

Due to the presence of False Coddling Moth (FCM) and others pests, the EU inspection level reached to 25% from 5%.

The effective implementation of the new system would enable to expand export trade and ensure trade balance. It further requires promoting products, identifying country's major export products and ensuring quality and safety among others, he stated.

So far, Ethiopia digitalized over 540 services and would be the 11th country in applying e-Phyto system in Africa, it was learnt.

Mayor Adanech...

"For the TVET technology and innovation to solve challenges at grass root level, equal attention needs to be given not only in fulfilling inputs but also creating better marketing linkage."

Adanech commended the TVET for its contribution in the ongoing development to Addis Ababa and urged actors in the area to promote innovative outputs.

The Addis Ababa City Administration Labor and Skills Bureau Head Tiratu Beyene for his part indicated that the TVET sector has served as the right hand for the ongoing development activities in the country. "Through applying technologies

that are adopted by the TVET sector, we are contributing to expediting Ethiopia's socioeconomic development."

Having the vision to advance the sector's role, priority has been given to reorganizing TVET colleges, offering quality mentor training, and interest-based short-term and long-term programs that would create a skilled labor force, he elaborated.

The Bureau Head also stated that efforts have been geared toward import substitution, boosting productivity, and creating a substantial number of jobs as well as attracting foreign currency and

ushering technological advancement in the TVET sector.

In addition, various competitions that aim to expand innovation and technology in TVET are being carried out. "However, the wrong perception toward the sector has remained a challenge and the situation requires the stakeholders' consolidated engagement," Tiratu emphasized.

Some 15 TVET colleges, six small and medium enterprises, and innovators are taking part in the exhibition which is scheduled to take place from June 22-27, 2024. Over 50,000 people are expected to the grand event.

Premier reveals...

where we will not be able to recover. A cut-down tree can be replaced within 10 years, but the depleted soil will not be replaced in a thousand years," he said, emphasizing the damage that soil erosion can cause.

The Prime Minister further highlighted that climate change will not be addressed by rhetoric but rather by heroes who have planted seedlings. In this regard, Ethiopia has been registering commendable results

in planting coffee, vegetable, and fruit saplings since the launching of the Green Legacy Program.

"Planting is independent of any political ideology. Our vote count varies during elections. But at the time of planting, 120 million people are counted as one. Accordingly, all Ethiopians should participate in the greenery program."

During the Green Legacy pre-launch

program, Ethiopia's forest cover report was launched. The report indicated that by 2023, the country's forest cover had increased to 23.6% from 17.2% in 2019. In his remarks, Premier Abiy emphasized the need to continue building on this progress.

The report was followed by the premiere of an international documentary film that captures the essence and impact of the Green Legacy Program through human

stories, according to the Office of the Prime Minister.

For the past five years, Ethiopia has diligently pursued an annual planting program under the Green Legacy Initiative, originated by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed in 2019. On Friday, the country marked the beginning of the 2024 planting cycle, reflecting collectively on the impact of the people's efforts over the past five years.

Opinion

Bridging divides through National Dialogue

BY ADDISALEM MULAT

As things stand at present, Ethiopia has been jumping through hoops with a focus on staging a national dialogue that would play an extremely important role in resolving the intricate barriers of the country. It is commonly assumed that carrying out national dialogue will pave the way for ensuring peace and tranquility in the length and breadth of the country in addition to forestalling socio-political calamities at the earliest possible time.

Given the current circumstances, the Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission (ENDC) has been fully involved in figuring out major contentious issues shackling the hands and feet of the country. It is largely expected that the Commission's efforts would bear fruits and produce results within the foreseeable future.

In the same fashion, national dialogue functions as a spring board for fashioning a democratic system, strengthening a common set of values, augmenting the culture of broad-mindedness, and other related aspects. Apart from giving prominence to conduct National Dialogue to ensure everlasting peace, ENDC has been carrying out its duties and responsibilities attaching importance to consolidating peace and tranquility.

As Ethiopia has been working in close corporation with more than a few bodies to successfully conduct a national dialogue with the intention of creating a consensus on major national political issues and bringing about lasting peace throughout the country, the whole kit and caboodle has been heading in the right direction.

As reliable dialogues are a real gadget for settling down a difference of opinion and political conditions, people from all walks of life have been working in close coordination with ENDC for realizing the intended target. In a related move, taking the huge role national dialogue plays in making the impossible possible and the unthinkable thinkable into consideration, all and sundry have jumpstarted working in close association with the Commission.

There are a few questions to reflect on to avoid noises around the concept of national dialogue and success stories and challenges associated with the experiences of countries across the globe could better inform Ethiopia.

It is vital to ask about the concept of national dialogue and its intentions in the process of building a common ground among groups for political dialogue and reconciliation process. Conceptually, national dialogue is a nationally owned political process aimed at generating consensus among a broad range of



national stakeholders in times of deep political crisis, in post-war situations or during far-reaching political transitions. It is believed that the process is typically accompanied by broader and inclusive societal consultations involving all sectors of society, according to sources.

It has been learned that a national dialogue is a process and its success depends on the same. Obviously, it passes through three successive phases: preparation, process, and implementation. The preparation phase can be as long, or longer, than the official process, as it often entails mini-negotiation processes in itself to establish key parameters and the institutional framework (i.e. mandate, agenda, participant selection, decisionmaking procedures, etc.).

Some nations task a key institutional body with preparing the process. Once the key parameters are established, preferably by consensus, the process (or negotiation) phase -the most public phase of the national dialogue - begins. Once an outcome is reached, the implementation phase begins. The success of national dialogue can be defined on two levels, first in terms of whether an agreement was reached or not; and second, the extent to which the agreement was actually implemented.

By the same token, it is figured out that in principle, national dialogue involves the public at all structural levels, formal or informal, and brings significant actors to the table, going beyond the elites, to deal with issues of discontents and misunderstanding in the course of the nation-building process. In its real sense, for example, civil society leaders, and even external actors, can initiate informal dialogues between key actors, even if they have lesser mandates than one initiated by the state. These informal dialogues can entail trust-building meetings, negotiations, and consultations that lay the groundwork for formal national dialogue.

Ethiopia needs a highly inclusive and bottom-up approach to a national dialogue. Engaging the public and civil society should enforce the Ethiopian national dialogue as the country owns indigenous

approaches to dealing with conflicts and reconciliation processes. As history informs, the elites of Ethiopia have been at the center of political fragmentation and agenda-setting for more than a century.

The Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission (ENDC) has been studying and exploring global experiences intending to carry out a successful National Dialogue that will tackle the country's long-standing quandaries that still continue to take a huge toll on the people. Given the current circumstances, the Commission has been fully involved in figuring out major contentious issues shackling the hands and feet of the country. It is largely expected that the Commission's efforts would bear fruits and produce results.

In actual fact, it cannot be denied that the Commission has been discharging its responsibilities with a focus on addressing barriers. Nowadays, Ethiopia on several occasions has been leaning over backwards to get to the bottom of the stockpiles of glitches that pose national threats. And, the planned national dialogue is part of the country's effort to redress the longtime setbacks.

There is no denial with the fact that national dialogue plays a huge role in resolving a diverse range of social and economic impediments and bringing the various Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples of Ethiopia together. As some of the conundrums facing the country need a quick fix more than ever before, the Commission since its inception has been clearing the way for setting up a common understanding and reaching common ground by conducting national dialogue.

As national dialogue plays an extremely important role in reinforcing cultural harmony and solidarity, the general public has been standing by the side of the Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission.

Speaking to the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) ENDC Commissioner Prof. Mesfin Araya recently said that the commission has been established with the objectives of facilitating consultation between the various segments of the society

by identifying the root causes of the difference in fundamental national issues and identifying the topics.

Studying the experience of others has become a common experience globally and attempts have been made to understand the reason behind the successes and failures of national dialogues that have been conducted in various countries, the commissioner added.

External interference, government interference, lack of inclusiveness, and others were among the main reasons for the failures of the National Dialogue conducted in different countries. On the other hand, some nations have made successful deliberations citing the experience of Tunisia.

He further stated that countries including Yemen and Sudan failed to execute successful National Dialogue because of the interference of the government and external actors. Accordingly, conducting an all-inclusive dialogue that consists of the lower part of the society, religious leaders, civil society and others is crucial.

The commission has been making an extensive preparation to execute an inclusive and transparent National Dialogue complying with its mandate. Due attention has been given to keeping the deliberation inclusive and participatory in the preparation, process, and implementation phases to bring about holistic peace-making.

It is expected that the national dialogue will yield positive results, unite the nation, and set a framework for sustainable growth for years to come. It is fully committed to tackling these issues in order to create an environment that will be conducive to growth and development, both for the country as a whole and for its citizens.

Since its establishment, the Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission has been working hard to address many challenges that are facing the country. ENDC is aware that some of these challenges need solutions more than ever before, and its primary mission is to pave the way for a successful national dialogue.

Creating a common understanding and reaching common ground is critical in addressing some of the long-standing issues that continue to suppress growth and development in the nation. Through national dialogue, the Commission hopes to find pathways towards progress that will benefit all Ethiopians.

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

Business & Economy

Do local companies prepare themselves to coup up the imminent challenges?

BY ABEBE WOLDEGIORGIS

Recently, the government introduced a new regulation and rules which allow foreign companies to engage in whole sale and retail trade in the country. Sectors previously reserved to the local businessmen now step by step are opened to the foreigners and the scheme is expected to improve the trade and transaction system of the country.

The regulation also opens the door to foreign businessmen to engage in import and export trade.

Fikadu Petros is a lawyer while reflecting his view in this regard he said that, when the newly introduced regulation with regard to trade and business is implemented fully, in addition to improving the trade system, enhances the nation competitiveness in the international market.

Costentininos Berhe (PHD) an economist working as lecturer at Addis Ababa University said that, in the very beginning inhibiting foreign business men from engaging in the wholesale and retail trade was wrong. He also said that the new regulation which allows foreign business men to engage in trade helps to modernize the trade system through knowledge and technology transfer.

It helps to resolve the problems pervasive in the trade value chain in the country, supports the enhancement of legitimate trade, and stabilizes inflation. He also said that it brings opportunities to the local private sector to draw lesson and experience sharing. The involvement of foreign companies in whole sale and retail business though seems new in Ethiopia, it is common in the outside world. Even diaspora Ethiopians engaged in various retail businesses in many countries.

As to Fikadu, the government introduced the regulation due to desperate situation prevailed in the country because of the incompetency of local private sector. Though the government provided protection and incentive to the local business, they remained stagnant and failed to bring change in the business.

The government supports business men for the growth of local industries but if it is impossible, it rather better to open the market to foreign companies so that the business relied more on competition rather than subsidy.

“Though the government provided protection to local companies, the price of production and products is increasing instead of decreasing therefore; to support consumers the government is forced to open the market to foreign companies,” Said Fikadu.

“To date providing protection to local businessmen did not bring any benefit, even the subsidy is being used in appropriately” exclaimed Fikadu, citing the introductory

The government supports business men for the growth of local industries but if it is impossible, it rather better to open the market to foreign companies so that the business relied more on competition rather than subsidy

part of the regulation which indicated the failure of the provision of protection to the local companies.

A person who engaged in the consulting trade and business on his part noted that, the government measures taken to improve the trade system failed to meet the objectives therefore, it was resorted to find other options that is opening up the sector to foreign actors. In his view the decision taken by the government is wisely.

He further said that, the demand for whole sale and retail business is growing from time to time and, unless the business is supported by foreign actors it will be endangered. Currently the wholesale and retail business is monopolized by few local companies therefore, to make the sector competent, opening the sector to foreigners should be taken as a way out.

In the past, the government in order to stabilize the market established companies such as “alebejimla” by allocating huge amount of investment but failed to fulfill its

mission because the sector is monopolized by few local private companies. However, in line with allowing foreign companies to do business here, it is essential to inspect them when they conduct their business here whether it goes in line with the rules and regulation introduced by the government.

According to Fikadu, the rules more benefit the consumers than the traders. The government provided incentive and protection to traders engaged in four sectors such as import, export, wholesale and retail trades. However, the expected outcome was not obtained. The government’s giving up of protection to the local traders, enables foreign companies to import huge amount of commodities and supply in fair price in which enable to stabilize the market.

Nevertheless, some argue that the incoming of foreign business men to engage in whole sale and retail trade might bring pressure on local traders. They further said that, the current anomalies witnessed on the trade system, is not created by the mal performance of local traders. A financial professional who demanded to hold his name anonymous said that he believes that the introducing of the new regulation and the incoming of foreign companies can improve the archive trade system but the failures of the local trade system is posed by the foreign currency crunch in the banks.

He further said that, in fact, most traders took the foreign currency crunch as good opportunity to engage in clandestine activities such as illegal trade therefore, one can conclude that shortage of hard currency and the related financial policy play their part for the failure of the trade system.

As to the financial professional, side by side with the inviting of foreign companies to engage in whole sale and retail trade governing the financial system through market system making the Dollar-birr exchange rate similar to the parallel market is essential and unless it is implemented bringing foreign investors here is unrealistic.

In the past, the government agreed with the American Wholemart huge company to do business here and started working but due to shortage of hard currency, because the government monopolistic policy, the company canceled its plan.

Therefore, as to him, inviting foreign companies should be coupled with inviting foreign banks to do business here and determining the exchange rate based on market so that curbing foreign currency crunch will be possible. Unless these is realized no foreign company come here to engage in wholesale, retail, import and export trade.

He corroborated his argument by citing that, currently one Dollar is exchanged by 57 birr in the formal market in Banks while it is exchanged by 120 birr in the parallel market and in such a situation expecting

foreign companies to come here and engage in trade business is unrealistic. Therefore, determining the exchange rate based on market is essential.

However, Costentininos Berihe (Ph.D) does not agree by the above arguments. As to him, without the incoming of foreign banks and determining the exchange rate by market, foreign companies can come here to engage in the whole sale, retail, and import and export business. The new regulation itself created good opportunities and can attract foreign companies to come here and do business. But liberalizing the financial sector also further encourages them to do a lot.

He further said that, determining the money exchange rate by market not only helps to attract foreign companies to invest here but also to stabilize the whole economy. He also said that, in our country market is conducted based on the black market exchange rate which disturb the entire business system and to bring the long lasting solution, determining the exchange rate by supply and demand is essential. Many agreed that, governing the exchange rate by market price might aggravate inflation but as to the financial professional person analysis, the existing market already is going by considering the exchange rate in the parallel market. Therefore, the society also has been familiar with such development and the pain that comes from the inflation only put pressure for the time being. To with stand the pressure due to the demand for foreign currency, the government should enhance its foreign currency garnering and preserving capacity.

If the value of one Dollar becomes 120 birr by formal market, customers do not go to purchase Dollar in the black market. When there is sufficient hard currency in the market no person resort to go to the black market rather he/she goes to the formal market. Therefore, the government before starting to determine the Dollar /Birr exchange rate by market, it has to accumulate plenty of hard currency in the Banks.

After deciding to determine the exchange rate by the market, if there is no sufficient hard currency in the banks, customers again will go to the black market to obtain Dollar which again poses market disruption. As to Costentininos, determining the exchange rate should be a must and if it happens at least the nation obtains 12 billion Dollars from the diaspora because they start to send their money to their relatives in the formal and legal market channel instead of the black market.

This again reduces illegal trade posed by black market and creates stability. The government revenue also will be increased.

Supermarkets owned by foreigners also supply quality products with fair price to their customers but they may demand hard currency for their profit.

Planet Earth

Conservation of natural resources make agriculture sector sustainable

BY EPHREM ANDARGACHEW

Ethiopia has protected the environment through natural resource management that incorporates traditional methods. Millions of Ethiopians volunteer annually for a range of environmental conservation projects, which are vital to both the environment and the country's agricultural industry.

Forest conservation, in particular, helps safeguard and maintain biodiversity, as forests are essential habitats for various species and natural carbon storage. These efforts not only benefit the environment but also support sustainable agriculture methods for communities living near forests and across the nation. Maintaining and restoring forests benefits the ecosystem and promotes sustainable agricultural practices for populations living in and near forests and across the country.

Watershed management is another milestone task that could serve as a model for natural resource preservation efforts. Ethiopia's highlands and abundant rivers are essential for agriculture, drinking water, and electricity generation. Watershed management strategies like terracing, agro-forestry, and soil conservation help minimize erosion, enhance water quality, and maintain healthy ecosystems.

Farmers across the country are known for their traditional land management practices that are key to agriculture. Many Ethiopians

use traditional land management strategies to conserve natural resources. Farmers practice rotational grazing to prevent overgrazing and preserve grassland quality, supporting the agricultural sector by providing fodder for animals while maintaining necessary plants on farmland.

The government's approach to community-based natural protection and conservation efforts is an admirable environmental policy. Ethiopia has placed a greater emphasis on community-based conservation tasks, involving local populations in decision-making and benefit-sharing agreements for natural resource management. This approach increases local capacity and ownership of conservation activities.

Ethiopia's natural resources and environmental protection efforts, combining conservation methods, traditional knowledge, and community participation, support the conservation of natural resources while promoting sustainable development, benefiting agriculture.

Ethiopia's conservation of natural resources significantly impacts the nation's agricultural methods. Soil erosion is a major issue in Ethiopia, leading to the loss of topsoil and reduced agricultural output, making soil conservation essential. Natural protection techniques like terracing, contour plowing and agroforestry help prevent soil erosion, promote soil health, and increase water retention capacity, providing more consistent and fruitful growing conditions for crops.

Ethiopian agriculture heavily relies on rainfall for irrigation, making water management crucial for crop production. Watershed management measures such as check dams, water collecting structures, and irrigation systems help conserve water resources, enhance water availability for agriculture, and reduce the risk of crop yield reductions due to droughts.

Nature conservation efforts help Ethiopia adapt to climate change, increasing climate resilience by improving ecosystem processes, retaining soil moisture, and reducing vulnerability to extreme weather events. This resilience is essential for maintaining agriculture's long-term viability in the face of climate change.

The Ethiopian Ministry of Agriculture's State Minister for Natural Resources Development, Professor Eyasu Elias, stated to The Ethiopian Herald that the country's fertile land, water, and human resources have not been sufficiently developed to ensure food security. The agricultural sector has not progressed enough to support and grow the economy, facing challenges from droughts and climate change in the last decade.

Recognizing this, Ethiopia has taken a strong stance in protecting and developing natural resources, focusing on degraded lands, afforestation, soil preservation, and environmental activities since the country's political reform in mid-2018. This sustainable approach supports the agriculture sector, now a significant

contributor to the country's economy.

Efforts over the last five years to manage watersheds, conserve natural resources, and implement green legacy initiatives have enabled Ethiopia to have sustainable natural resources supporting the agriculture sector. Under the motto "Let's Adorn Ethiopia," the country is now Africa's leading fruit exporter.

The Ethiopian Green Legacy Initiative has planted 32.5 billion seedlings in the past five years, with 60% grown in farmers' backyards for food. Farmers who planted seedlings have begun producing and exporting fruit, making Ethiopia Africa's largest exporter. 35% of the seedlings were planted to prevent floods, reforest degraded mountains, restore forest cover, and prevent soil erosion, benefiting the agriculture sector's climate change resilience.

With over 7.5 billion seedlings prepared in 123,000 nurseries, Ethiopia is set to launch the Green Legacy Initiative program nationwide on June 28, 2024, aiming to turn the country green. These natural protection tasks promote sustainable land management, boost soil fertility and water availability, protect biodiversity, and enhance climate change resilience, ensuring food security, livelihoods, and environmental sustainability in the agricultural sector.

Ethiopia's integration of natural conservation and preservation initiatives with watershed management is crucial for the long-term sustainability of the agriculture sector.

TVET's impact...

of programs is developing some kind of technological sub-culture in Ethiopia, affecting the daily language we use. You can always hear the youth requesting, for instance, a 'missed call' or 'page it out' or 'see you online' etc.

Technology has introduced a number of sub-cultures in Ethiopia, including, for instance, Valentine's Day, Father's Day, Mother's Day, Water Day, and a number of celebrations of 'Days'. These are all Western and alien days that are incompatible with the cultures of nations, nationalities, and peoples of this country.

Due to technological progress worldwide, youth in Ethiopia are trapped into consumer xenophobia and cultural neo-colonialism under the guise of modernity and civilization, thus despising or underrating goods of the same quality that are locally manufactured. This trend has also affected the capability of professionals in the country who are biased against commodities manufactured locally by indigenous interpreters.

Blind subjugation to views, ideas, and ideologies that do not tally with normal public life has led some Ethiopian youth to copy views, ideas, and philosophical beliefs under a smoke screen of the universality of knowledge, wisdom, and world outlook.

Our scholars and managers are always busy trying to benchmark Western academic, technological, administrative, and development programs. This is basically fair and fine as long as it adds value to the development needs of the country, but it requires the knowledge and wisdom on the pros and cons of Western technological innovations.

We need to prepare our own scales, checklists, and standards and quality levels before we opt for any type of technology we adopt. The experts and scholars in this country have all the capacity and knowledge to at least make decisions on the choice of the right technology, and we need to find appropriate processes for using them.

One area of concern is access to appropriate technologies that are employed in different sectors of the Ethiopian economy. Over the last forty years, the Ethiopian ministry engaged in the development of agriculture or the Ministries of agriculture now and then have been reporting and talking about the introduction of appropriate technologies to the Ethiopian farmers.

Indeed, there were attempts to introduce these technologies to a number of model farmers, but Ethiopia has a long way to travel before each farmer becomes the

custodian of farmland-based appropriate technologies and off-farm technological innovations.

The proliferation of cultural neo-colonialism is functionally interrelated with the employment of technologies that fit into what some scholars call technological imperialism.

It might appear to be easy to talk or write about how technology affects our traditional cultural values and our cherished cultural heritages. Some of the challenges from technological developments are inevitable while some could be accepted at face value. But we need to solicit solutions for some of the negative trends.

Families and schools need to work together to collectively find out solutions for children who spend their whole evening in front of a TV set watching programs that are not compatible with their age and also look for solutions or replacements that can make the children more active and innovative. Excessive use of game software can easily detract children from focusing on their regular lessons.

Social and traditional cultural organizations need to come up with programs that can help the youth to blend their appreciation for technology with due respect and fondness

for their cultural values and norms.

Technology undoubtedly makes life much easier but it could also be a trap; which is sometimes permanent. Inappropriate use of technological innovations can endanger social bonds and human intimacy that is highly cherished in Ethiopia. Persons involved in creative arts can use various means and ways in which the youth can appreciate the technological and cultural values that are locally and globally accepted.

TVET training programs need to take into consideration the vision of the country in Digital Ethiopia 2025, which is already gaining prominence in most of the economic sectors of the country. Well-organized trainings on IT, AI, and popularizing digitalization in almost all sectors of the national economy is now the main focus of the development programs of the country in which TVET institutions in the country can participate.

Ethiopian sociologists and experts in social psychology can conduct extensive research on the impact of the development of technology on the cultural values in Ethiopia and can come up with comprehensive and multi-faceted solutions in which the entire social fabric in the country can participate.

Art & Culture

African fashion: An art form or a money-making machine?

BY MULUGETA GUDETA

The current boom in fashion and design in Africa is a relatively recent phenomenon, perhaps dating back to the early years of this century. Previously Africa has never been remarkable for its fashion or design which was never an industry as it is now. By the way, how did fashion start in Africa? According to available information, “the first forms of clothing were bark cloth, furs, skins and hides, and the rest of the body adorned with beautification marks and color pigments. Males simply wrap the bark cloth that passes between the legs over a belt. Similarly, women draped the cloth over the belt to hide the front of their bodies.”

Designing as an art form is defined as “the method of human expression that follows a system of highly developed procedures to imbue objects, performances, and experiences with significance. Like all art forms, designing has the potential to solve problems...”

Information about fashion says “Fashion is one of the most creative and fascinating fields of art and expression. It is a form of art and skill where one can use their unique imagination and skills to create new styles, trends, and outfits. Fashion is best described as the style or styles of pairing clothes in a classy and unique way.”

In Africa, fashion and design may look like writing an African novel or painting an African portrait which can be global in form but African in content. Content precedes form. There is some philosophical element in all this. What comes first, matter or spirit? form or content? Or is it the other way round? It sounds like a “the egg or hen first?” dilemma. Who comes first? How do clothes look like or how they are conceived and with what materials they are produced?

Appearance can be universal but the way the material is presented, or the concept should inevitably be African. You can import the materials from China to produce clothing with an African fashion design imbued with African spirit. The material is what gives real content to the clothes and not vice versa. You can copy forms from designers in Paris, but you have to remain fiercely African. Otherwise, you are not an African designer but a designer without identity or a designer with divided loyalty.

In the modern world what we wear reflects our identity. You can toss and turn jeans one hundred times as a possible fashion material or fabric, but it will never turn out to be African because jeans are American or Western. You can produce an African fashion with African material and give it an African expression. Africa has its ideas of how clothes should look like or what should go into creating their identity.

In Africa as elsewhere in the world, the clothing industry and fashion industry are not the same. It is important to make a distinction between the two. “Fashion design deals more with the generation of ideas whereas the clothing industry produces the garments that are generated from the design ideas.”



Designing in the fashion industry consists of creating, fashioning, executing, or producing according to plan. What they call “the seven elements of design are, form, shape, line, color, texture, typography and space.”

Africa has recently become the hub or mainstay of the fashion and textile industry due to the ongoing modernization of the traditional clothes-making industry that has a long history across the continent. “The fashion and textile industry are Africa’s second-largest post-agricultural sector, with its market value worth 31 billion dollars by 2020 and increasing annually.

The fashion industry is a marketing and production model in which clothing is moved from the runaway to major retails in second.” Fashion is therefore big business in Africa which is growing at an unprecedented pace because of globalization of the fashion industry in general and the introduction of high-tech designing and production techniques in the industry.

The African fashion industry sometimes produces local ideas as input but produces them for foreign markets. The African fashion industry, like anywhere in the world, is an elite industry that produces for elite markets and fashion houses.

Writing about this trend in the fashion industry in Africa, another blogger says, “A growing middle class in Africa has money to spend on clothes and are taking an increasing interest in what they wear. Africa’s wealthy elite is also growing, and the continent is one of the fastest-growing markets for luxury goods. That’s particularly the case in Nigeria, where a fashion-conscious population is enjoying a high economic growth rate, but many other countries in Africa are experiencing a rise in both wealth and interest in fashion.”

Maybe a reorientation in African and Ethiopian fashion design and production could be as another catalyst for expansion could be a timely move. Instead of focusing on the wealthy elites in Africa and across the world, the industry could cater to members of the lower classes with lower incomes so that they could enjoy the beauty and bounty inherent in

African culture and arts.

The fashion industry can also take a cue from its Chinese counterparts where different standards are designed and implemented so that consumers in different income brackets can benefit from the varieties of apparel brought to the market. In this way, most people would be turned into consumers rather than being simple observers without the means of buying what their hearts are desiring.

Early beginnings in this direction can be seen in Ethiopian fashion industry as young designers are increasingly getting inspiration from the masses who are living in the rural areas as custodians of traditional Ethiopian ways of preparing their apparels. Most of the modern fashion designs we encounter in fashionable boutiques in many cities and towns. These attires are however produced with traditional dress making in mind. This is an encouraging trend in the industry because in the long run it will reach more consumers in the low-income brackets who would be brought into the market.

Focusing only on elite consumers not only narrows the potential of the market but also marginalizes potentially the most critical consumers, i.e. those living in the countryside. New and popular fashion brands should also be encouraged to flourish and have so far been languishing in the margins for lack of investment as well as fresh ideas.

The main issue in Ethiopian fashion or design nowadays mainly boils down to the question of how to transform traditional apparel into modern ones without losing their original appeal or by adding new features that emphasize their uniqueness or particularity. How to modernize Ethiopian clothing which is “typically made of bright and colorful fabrics, and many Ethiopian dresses are adorned with intricate beadworks.”

In Ethiopia, a new generation of fashion-savvy young inventors is feeding the fashion industry and parallel to this, a new brand of Ethiopia designers has emerged at the height of the economic boom that allowed consumers to enjoy their traditional clothing presented in a new and fashionable form that reflects the

ever-changing global fashion world.

The art of combining traditional weaving with modern design and marrying both to the emerging design and development in textile fabrics is apparently behind Ethiopia’s presently explosive fashion industry despite the ups and downs in market demands and export opportunities. It is estimated that there are more than 60 textile factories in Ethiopia that are supplying domestic as well as foreign markets.

The design industry in particular is almost shrouded in anonymity as it is rarely enjoying media coverage or sufficient investment. The other surprising fact is that the fashion industry in Ethiopia is almost exclusively the domain of women while elsewhere young and established male fashion designers are easily available, proving to the world that fashion is not gender exclusive.

The outlook for the future is sure to be better than it is now because male fashion designers will surely be attracted to the sector as women continue to make progress and reap the benefits.

The same can be said about the African fashion or design industry. “The future of African fashion looks bright, with more and more designers’ brands and design houses making their mark on the global fashion scene. From sustainable materials to traditional techniques, the African fashion industry is embracing new trends and predictions that are shaping the future of fashion in Africa.”

In Ethiopia, the main challenge in the fashion and design industry is the need to enlarge the acceptance or popularity of apparel produced and designed by the industry. As we said above, it should not concentrate only on elite markets and elite consumers. Ordinary Ethiopians should also be allowed to get access to the newly designed traditional and quality female and male apparel that can be used not only during holidays but also in daily life. In this way, demand can increase, and the industry will expand provided that it manages to produce garments that are fit for normal days and for ordinary citizens who cannot afford high-class or expensive clothing.

Society

Promoting self-reliance through building national capacity

BY MENGISTEAB TESHOME

According to a report from the Ministry of Health, Ethiopia, like many of the developing countries, relies heavily on imported pharmaceutical products to address the pharmaceutical needs of its people, which make the country vulnerable to supply chain disruption aside from consuming its budget due to the rising prices of pharmaceutical items.

However, in recent years, to change this scenario and meeting the demand it needs, the Ethiopian government is engaging in drug production initiative and is undertaking a number of activities to enhance local capacity to production of pharmaceutical products, become self-reliant, improved access, and affordability of pharmaceutical products and transform Ethiopia into a regional pharmaceutical manufacturing hub. In response, encouraging progress is seen.

While presenting her Ministry's 100-day performance review of current Ethiopian fiscal year, Health Minister Mekdes Daba (MD) also revealed the improvement witnessed in the pharmaceutical sector.

According to the Minister, Ethiopia's domestic production of drugs and other medical supplies has reached 36%. The 'Made in Ethiopia' national movement which has been carried out since the past two years with the aim to encourage domestic manufacturers and increase productivity, has also been playing a significant contribution in enhancing local production of drugs and other medical supplies.

In earlier times, Ethiopia's domestic production capacity of drugs and other medical supplies was only 8%. However, currently, the country has been able to cover 36% of drugs and other medical supplies by domestic production, Minister Mekdes added.

Among other contributing factors for the achievements, the incentives being provided by the government in a bid to encourage domestic pharmaceutical manufacturers resulted in the entrants of new investors in the sector.

"Two medicine manufacturing companies have entered into Ethiopia and commenced production over the past 100 days alone."

The country is exerting efforts to manufacture drugs and other medical supplies with a vision to meet domestic demand and export to African countries thereby gain significant economic returns.

In an exclusive interview with the Deputy General Manager of Addis



The country is exerting efforts to manufacture drugs and other medical supplies with a vision to meet domestic demand and export to African countries thereby gain significant economic returns

Pharmaceutical Factory Yohannes Fisha, the incentives put in place by the government to support the pharmaceutical industry are yielding considerable outcomes.

Ethiopia has the potential for both the manufacturing and marketing of essential pharmaceutical products. The progress witnessed in the area is promising; however, more efforts should be applied to address the bottlenecks demonstrated in the industry.

He further noted that if local pharmaceutical manufacturing industries are supported in every possible way in a way they can produce significant amounts of medicines and pharmaceutical items, to improve access and provide to the market with reasonable price, be it at home or regional levels.

It is crystal clear that ensuring access to essential medicines is not merely a matter of public health; it is also fundamental human right. This principle, enshrined in international frameworks and national legislations, has been a driving force behind Ethiopia's comprehensive efforts to guarantee equitable access to life-saving drugs for its citizens.

According to him, the right to health, as outlined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, encompasses the right to access essential medicines.

This recognition underscores the inextricable link between the availability of medicines and the realization of the highest attainable standard of health.

"I personally urge the government and pertinent stakeholders to increase efforts in supporting the sector because it improves access to essential medicines with reasonable price. Moreover, it can also spur job creation and technology transfer as well as ensure broader economic growth."

Addis Pharmaceutical Factory is working attentively to produce essential medicines that could help Ethiopia make self-reliance and a pharmaceutical manufacturing hub of Africa in the future.

Pharmaceutical Analysis and Quality Assurance Senior Expert at Debre Birhan University, Yehualashet Teshome for his part said that the recorded achievement is commendable. It is a promising step in building national self-reliance in the pharmaceutical industry through local production.

He noted that Ethiopia is a huge country with various topography and population density. The figure tells the extent of the demand for essential medicines among the society.

To address the supply and demand gaps, Yehualashet recommended the significance of working in collaboration

with all concerned bodies to enhance quality control measures, build responsible pharmaceutical companies and produce as per international standard.

To increase the performance in local production of pharmaceutical medicines and other products, the Ethiopia Investment Commission and stakeholders should keep on inviting foreign and local investors to join the industry.

The Ethiopian Food and Drug Administration (EFDA) which is in charge of safeguarding the public's health through ensuring the safety and quality of food and efficacy of medicines as well as functionality of medical devices and other health products, should reinforced its activities in this regard.

Pharmaceutical Supply Chain Management Lecturer at Dambi Dollo University Wondimu Yemane for his part said that the pharmaceutical industry demands skilled human capital. In this regard, it is important to avail the sector with well-educated, prudent workforces.

"The human capital development in Ethiopia is more inclined to clinical trials than industrial development so it is high time to frame ways in balancing between the two. And it is advisable to strengthen university-industry linkage and provide trainees with industry led contents to produce informed human capital that could support the nation's pharmaceutical industry."

The pace seen in the sector is creditable; but it is necessary to harness efforts in ensuring the sustainability of local pharmaceuticals industry progress through addressing the bottlenecks of the sector.

He finally said that, if all stakeholders work thoroughly in building nation's ambition to become self-reliant in the pharmaceutical sector through local production, it will be possible to produce and enhance access to life-saving medicines not only for local consumption but also provide for countries of the region, he concluded.

Law & Politics



Ardent participant from the get-go

BY DANIEL ALEMAYEHU

The ambition to ensure an inclusive and fair world order seems to have been implemented after the BRICS emerged as an alternative path for those who have been isolated due to their economic, political and social status and ideologies. Shaping the current world order and the rules of the play should be answered in a way that fits everyone from every corner.

From the beginning of January 2024, the BRICS founding members passed a decision to expand their number of members so that it could incorporate more countries. In this regard, the bloc decided to add six new member states including Ethiopia. The bloc is aiming at becoming one of the bold economic and political blocs around the world and making things that mostly tilted to the Western world right.

Having giant blocs in different areas and cooperation surely opens many doors for countries like Ethiopia to observe their opportunities and choose the one that fits their national interest. Ethiopia has been one of the few countries that take the burden to be the voice of the voiceless in advocating equal presentation at the high table of the world coupled with a win-win approach on any national interest issues. The country believes that every state around the world should be treated equally and no one gets extra benefits in any scenario.

It is a fact that economic strength and political paradigm are the most important aspects when it comes to getting involved in any activity in the world. Realizing a multipolar world and making financial power-oriented institutions free from any external pressures, such a bloc like BRICS should be flexing its muscles and making the expected difference. Global

financial blocs are pressed by different interests from their financial sources. Blocs' dependency on their providers also creates room for bias and isolation when nations with different stands come to get their services.

Ethiopia strongly believes that major international organizations and blocs are under multiple pressures, and they must be free from any pressure and discrimination. Besides, a handful of nations are stirring the entire world and imposing their ideologies on nations that have uneven power with their opponents. Especially, the African and Latin American nations feel the heat of pressure on many occasions. The two continents contain a lot of populations, and yet they have not been represented well in global power.

Accordingly, Ethiopia has shown its pleasure and strong interest in becoming a member of the BRICS and will do everything to defend its national interest and enjoy the advantages. It brings a new world order that leaves no one behind. Every member builds their foundation on equal and mutual grounds. Such a move is also a blessing for those unrepresented continents.

The government of Ethiopia and the ruling party express their desire and commitment to working with the member states and the entire bloc. This has also been reflected At the International Interparty "BRICS and Partner Countries" Forum.

Delivering a speech on the forum, Adem Farah, Vice President of Ethiopia's ruling Prosperity Party, voiced the party's commitment to strengthening its engagement with the BRICS platform.

VP Adem stated, "Our president, Abiy Ahmed (PhD), has been a strong advocate for increased engagement with BRICS member countries and the platform itself. His vision and leadership have underscored

the importance of our involvement in this dynamic coalition."

"We are honored and delighted to be a part of BRICS, and we eagerly anticipate the collective progress and shared prosperity that our collaboration promises," the Vice President stated.

The Party is ready to advocate for BRICS's objectives and is committed to contributing its share towards shared goals, Adem noted adding "We are prepared to play our role as BRICS aims to reform global financial institutions and champion a multipolar world order."

The speed and quality of major national projects, including the Great Ethiopian Renaissance Dam—the largest dam in Africa—are proofs of Ethiopia's progress, he said pointing out that Ethiopia's economy is one of the fastest growing in the world and is now the 5th largest economy in Africa.

These achievements are evidence of the tireless efforts of the leadership and members of the Prosperity Party, the people of Ethiopia, and the support of our partners despite facing numerous natural and man-made challenges, Adem underlined.

The Vice President underscored the Prosperity Party's firm stance on principles of "sovereignty, territorial integrity, undivided and equal security, multilateralism, global justice, and the peaceful coexistence of nations."

The international governance and political system, financial system, and media narratives do not reflect the diversity of our world, Adem said adding "With their significant populations, Africa and Latin America remain underrepresented in crucial platforms such as the UN Security Council. Therefore, we strongly support efforts to reform the international governance system to be more inclusive and reflective of global diversity to ensure

world majority for a multipolar world."

PP Vice President mentioned the pivotal role of the BRICS in fostering cooperation and collaboration in peace, security, innovation, technology, and shared prosperity.

"Its achievements in these areas have been remarkable, and we commend the platform for its unwavering commitment to building a multipolar world order. We call for further cooperation, collaboration, and exchanges among BRICS and partner countries to amplify our collective impact."

He called for reforms to the "unjust" international governance and financial systems, highlighting the need for greater representation of Africa and Latin America on crucial platforms.

The Prosperity Party's support for the BRICS platform's objectives, including the reform of global financial institutions and the advancement of a multipolar world order, was a central focus of the speech. The party pledged to play a constructive role in realizing these shared goals.

Looking ahead, the Vice President announced that the Prosperity Party will hold its second congress within the next six months, providing an opportunity to "reevaluate our achievements over the past two and a half years and set new directions for the future."

He extended an invitation to the esteemed BRICS and partner country parties to participate in this significant event. His address underscored the Prosperity Party's commitment to strengthening Ethiopia's ties with the BRICS nations and shaping a more equitable global landscape.

As the country continues its remarkable journey of progress, the Prosperity Party's role in fostering international collaboration and advancing a multipolar world order remains a priority.

EPHREM ENDALE

Between you & me

'Cut-and-Dried Answers!'

I had this friend who just feels really comfortable giving alms to beggars and helping others in whatever way he can. Not that he has spare whatever to throw around; but he's naturally a guy who believes giving alms or helping others wasn't a matter of choice. Especially whenever he comes across some elderly and frail beggar he just dips his hand in his pockets and hands the beggars whatever sum his hands come up with. Once I remember him giving a hopelessly broken up old man the only money he has on ... a fifty-birr note. It was much later he told us that the fifty birr was kept to buy some cough medicine for his fiancé who was down with mild cold. To keep the waters still and calm a trio of us put in the fifty birr and the medicine was bought. At that time he was one of the happiest persons on the planet and we weren't letting that to melt away because he returning home with those empty pockets would have been the worst scenario to happen. Not that his fiancé was given to start mini battles in the house. But when time and circumstances call for it she could be one person with tempers you seldom come across. She comes out with all guns blazing and she wouldn't settle for taking prisoners! Otherwise she was a committed lady with life principles she observes whatever the circumstances.

But when it comes to giving alms to beggars seldom agrees with her man. She says while there is nothing wrong with giving alms selection was important. You just don't

give handouts or whatever to every shabbily dressed person waving his/her palms under your chin. Our guy was made of somewhat different fabric. He thinks that would be prejudice because all hungry people are hungry and should be helped. Well, that maybe the act of somewhat nice but too nice for this world of connen and cheaters of all kinds.

While their difference might appear too trivial to be given any more time than a couple of minutes the two still wangled over the issue. He had quite a number of disputes with his then fiancé who chose to take things in strides. If she is giving away a few cents let alone that much money she had to be convinced the person was genuinely poor and needed every cent that came their way. Especially if she comes across the old and the very old out on the streets by themselves there's no stopping her. On the surface you thought she was some extrovert who doesn't feel any sadness for people who find themselves on the bottom rungs of life unable to help themselves and their families, if they've any. No I told you she was lady of principles and you can't con her with those sad faces hunched shoulders and coarse and 'weakened' voice.

Times are tough and every action matters in determining which way we're headed and, most importantly, how we actually move. And these days it's common to come especially across gents moderately dressed and with little, if any, signs of hardship on their faces.

And usually that's where the connen and women come. By some unfortunate turn of things begging is no more something to be ashamed of, even if the public previously knew you as someone with every nice things in the world waiting for them. But sometimes life hits you in the painful spot unexpectedly and you find yourself without as much of a few cents for a hundred and one reasons. You might have been kicked out of work because of your own faults or because of what you say are "...enemies who have been after you..." for whatever reason. Out of work and with no way of getting another job the last resort for not a few people could be going out onto the streets. Ours being a very tolerant society many feel remorse for those who once had a good life and finally find themselves out in the streets for whatever reason. The connen and women capitalize on this very emotion of the public and believe me, they succeed in more ways than one. I mean the word 'CONMAN' isn't written on their foreheads.

Someone once told me of a person now departed, may his soul rest in peace, who collect some monthly retirement pay which, so he decided, wasn't enough for him. Well frankly generally speaking it's fair to say retirement pay seems to be never enough. Well maybe; it depends in the details. "Enough for what? Of course, most of us would say, to lead a decent life with hot food in your belly and roof over the head with a little extra for coffee with the boys, or girls. Incidentally when you

hear about the extraordinary high retirement pay some people collect, you know it is a whole lot of a different story for some.

This guy I was telling you about was a dyed-in-the-wool alcoholic and he needed the extra to quench his thirst. So what does he do? He disguises himself as best as he can and goes to some far-off place from where he lived at that time and the places he worked during his days of employment. And they say he was one alcoholic who never run out of money to hit the bottle. I told you very weirdly enough if you are somewhat moderately dressed and played the sad, dejected, broken down human being you have a better chance of getting money you never dreamed of.

Going back to our previous couple if someone asks me to take sides I'd be with the lady, as she has clearly designed principles and she sticks to them whatever comes, whatever goes. Many of us, to be as frank as possible, are not very much into this principles thing. We may say we've principles but digging deeper that's just about nice and confident-sounding words and no substance. Life principles; that's what many of us are missing. We need them if only to lessen the many confusions life throws under our feet because by being principled we would have our own already cut and dried answers for many of those things.

Our own 'cut-and-dried answers!' Wouldn't that be wonderful!

"It's not Over Until It's Over"

Yes, many would say it was the same old story. Again the England soccer team failed to deliver what's expected of it, playing like the national team of a country which has done and is doing so much for world football. Lackluster; that's the term that best describes them in their game with the Denmark elven. But, who do I think I am to criticize when that nations have all those pundits many times trying to cut each other's throats out over the airwaves. But there's one very important factor that comes out of this game. The English despite their mostly poor performance and trailing by one goal did the unexpected as the referee was getting ready to blow the final whistle. They scared the equalizer! Were they happy? What kind of question is that! Of course they were happy. They were so happy if you haven't seen the game and suddenly stumbled when they were rejoicing you'd be pardoned to think they must have won some championship. Would the Euro 2024 cup be on the flight to London? No comment. (It was so sudden you could see the hurt of the Danes who already must have decided three points were theirs and I really feel sorry for them.)

So what's all this fuss about a last minute goal! Well it reminds me of that great saying, "It isn't over until it's over." Isn't it because we many times forget about this saying that we turn back in the 'middle' of the not very deep river just because the push is a little harder; what about the other option of trying to hold on to the log a couple of meters away. You've completed four-fifth of your way

and you don't gather the energy to finish the remaining one-fifth which would have come as a game changer in your life. The advice gurus would tell to continue on our way even if it means going on our all fours because, "It isn't over until it's over."

Many of us, forgetting this timeless fact, have given up on our efforts much too early; thrown in the towel too fast while we still have the energy to go a couple of rounds more; thrown up our hands in defeat at the blink of an eye as if our D-Day has arrived while in truth a little more commitment and persistence could have seen us across the hurdle we thought we'd never cross. (Now it's me sounding like some advice guru, am I not?)

These days it seems many of us are highly skeptical of almost every other thing and choose to stay at the end of the line having lost all our energy of going against the little waves that may confront us along the way.

I'll tell you a story. There was this guy who studied accounting and one of the best in his job. His colleagues at the work place talked of him as he was a genius the Nobel Prize people have yet to discover. He never skips work and was never late. Now this becomes a little confusing and hard to believe when you hear the other side of his story. He drinks! Well that's an understatement taking how dug in he's in this hap bit. In life he seems to be familiar with only three places; his office, his watering halls (In fact he's regular of only one them!) and his bedroom when he finally calls it a day. He always drinks the real hard

stuff and you'd think he was fade up with life and was seeking the shortest and quickest way to the other world. One thing that puts off his colleagues and bosses is how he carries himself. He is not only badly dressed but terribly dressed! His colleagues since they respected him because of his impeccable work couldn't gather the confidence to tell him he should dress better. They feared he'd take their advice as an offense and turn his back on them.

His bosses meanwhile didn't hold back as did his colleagues. Initially they were soft and nice-sounding verbal advices. That failed to change things. Then he was officially given verbal warning with the written warning coming not long after. Now as I told you being a very gifted professional especially he got the warning letter the normally reserved fellow goes ballistic. He confronts his bosses saying that he didn't break any rule of the office and being demanded for the letter to be withdrawn. They didn't take back the letter but tried to play it cool and nice. He didn't fall for that. By some visible and invisible pressures, the management decided to let him go and he got wind of the news before the ax falls. He resigns.

Now sometimes your reputation outruns you by miles. His name has been circulating both in the form of admiration and also in the form of mild denunciation. Getting another job became a real torment. In the places he applied he was treated with the brightest of smiles and all the romantic-sounding beautiful language but still no one was ready

to take him in. Even in places he knew there indeed were open vacancies for accountants they told him they were not hiring because all positions were filled.

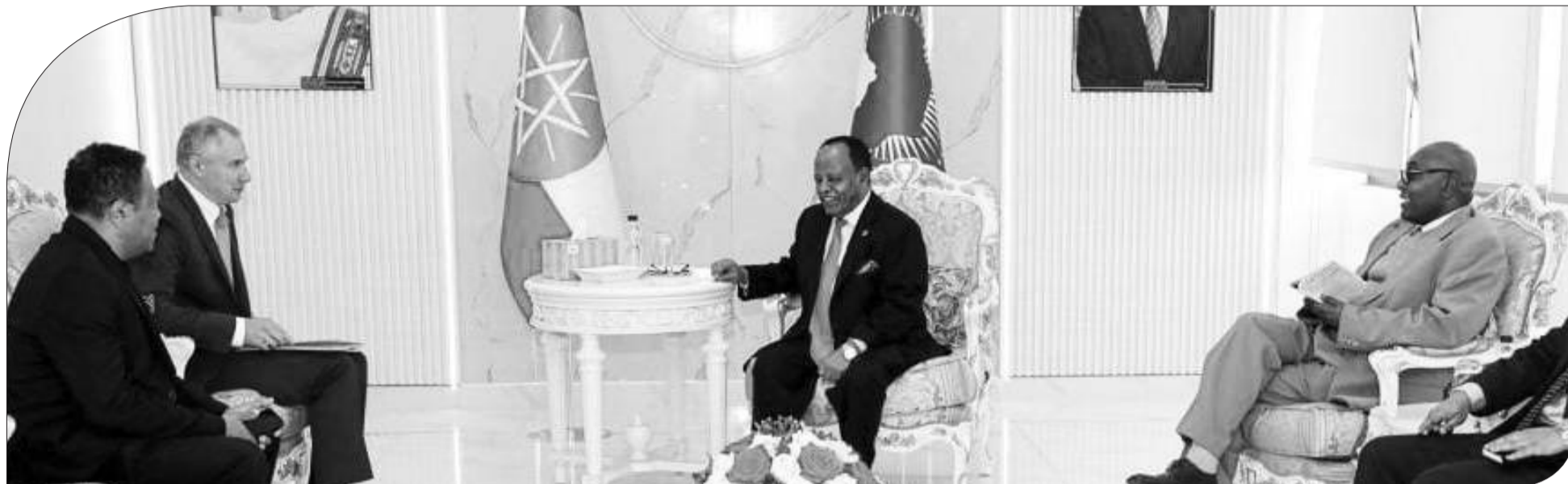
His anger slowly turns into frustration and then hopelessness and he was edging very close to the edge. Then something, no one really knew happens. He started talking about the perils of alcoholism. He started berating himself and others for guzzling very form of liquid that came their way. There was a universal feeling of confusion and helplessness. Him being the trine of the guy who doesn't mix much they couldn't paste his change of behavior to the advice of some particular person. Single and living by himself there was no better half or relative in the house who could make any impression on him.

Then suddenly he stopped being seen on the watering halls. At first there was fear that he might have done something bad for himself. A die-hard alcoholic like him truing his back on the bottle that easily and with absolutely no fanfare was a riddle still unsolved. Finally he landed a job with an international organization and the rest, as they say, is history.

The last I heard about him he worked in a Southern Africa country branch of his employers' organization.

Yes, and to all of us quitters out there it would be therapeutic to remember the saying, "It isn't over, until it's over!"

Diplomacy & Green legacy



BY NAOL GIRMA

The Minister of Foreign Affairs Taye Atske Selassie held a discussion with Belarusian Ambassador to Ethiopia, Parvel Vziatkin. The two sides noted the need to conduct regular political consultations to further enhance bilateral relations.



Ethiopia's Minister of Foreign Affairs Taye Atske Sellasie held a discussion with Executive Secretary of the UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), Claver Gatete on strategic areas of importance. Their discussion focused on strengthening collaboration between Ethiopia and ECA in strategic areas of importance defined by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, such as innovation, statistical data, social development and macroeconomic development.

A paradigm and mindset shift is needed for the change we want to see in our Green Legacy endeavors. Our goal for this year is to reach 40 billion seedlings from our overall target of 50 billion, which means we need to collectively plant 7.5 billion seedlings this planting cycle.

PM Abiy Ahmed



The Ethio-China Business Cooperation Promotion Conference, held in Addis Ababa, underscored the vast potential for economic collaboration between Ethiopia and China. The conference brought together over 200 participants, representing businesses from both nations with the aim to explore opportunities to strengthen economic ties.