



BY BETELHEM BEDLU

GLI shielding Nile Basin to achieve shared growth: MoWE

•Ethiopia plants 8.3 billion tree seedlings within Nile Basin

BY TSEAGYE TILAHUN

ADDIS ABABA - Ethiopia has been implementing the Green Legacy Initiative (GLI) in the Nile Basin to preserve water resources and achieve mutual development, said the Ministry of Water and Energy (MoWE).

Approached by the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA), MoWE Minister Eng. Habtamu Itefa said that the country is coordinating efforts to implement GLI

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Eng. Habtamu Itefa



ADDIS ABABA- Some 1,712, 183,820.22 Birr was raised for the construction of Abbay Dam mega project during the just ended budget year, disclosed Office of National Coordination for the Construction of the Abbay dam.

Emphasizing that the contribution of Ethiopians and members of Ethiopian Diaspora worldwide is on rise, Office's Public Relations and Media and Communication Director Hailu Abreham told the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that the office mobilized the stated amount through various means.

He said from the 1.7 billion Birr, around 1.4 billion Birr was collected from local bond sale and grant, while 17.3million Birr gained from Diaspora bond sale and grant.

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Gorgora Eco Resort: Exploring lakeside facility's magic

BY MESERET BEHAILU

ADDIS ABABA – Gorgora Eco Resort emerged as a thrilling tourist attraction for its splendid appearance and luxury services, Amhara State Communications Bureau expressed while inviting visitors to enjoy the lakeside facility experience.

Developed under the Dine for Nation initiative in Amhara state, the Gorgora Eco Resort that was built along the shore of Lake Tana is designed to improve visitors' satisfaction and elongate the time they spend in the country, Amhara State Communication Bureau Head Mengesha Fantaw (PhD) said.

He told The Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that Gorgora is unique for its quality, beauty, breadth, and charming nature it encompasses compared with other projects being made under the same initiative.

The Head pointed out that the resort incorporates hotels, restaurants, amphitheater and other services significant to keep the contentment of the visitor.

"Gorgora is full of wonders, attracts international community for being rich in alluring natural resources. The popular



project was completed recently which is attributed to the commitment of the reformist government leadership," he added.

Currently, a number of domestic tourists are enjoying the splendid Gorgora Eco

Resort, Fantaw said, adding that promotion works are underway so as to attract foreign visitors.

Mentioning that the tourism industry

See Gorgora Eco ... page 3



PHOTO : Gebabo Gebrie

Bank unveils CBE Birr Plus

BY YESUF ENDRIS

ADDIS ABABA - The Commercial Bank of Ethiopia (CBE) introduced an upgraded version of the CBE Birr app, a digital wallet that has been in use since 2017.

CBE carried out 72 percent of transactions digitally during the past fiscal year, it was learnt.

During the introduction of the upgraded wallet, CBE Birr Plus, Deputy and Acting

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ECTA spearheading Ethiopian coffee's global expansion

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The emerging creative metal artworks

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Equipping youth with necessary skills, for better future support.

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University supporting agroforestry expansion to boost productivity

BY YESUF ENDRIS

WOLKITIE—Conforming to the Green Legacy Initiative, Wolkitie University unveiled efforts exerted to support agroforestry to enable the country do well out of region's agricultural potentials.

Approached by the Ethiopian Press Agency, University's President Faris Delil (PhD) said that the university operates four nursery centers that produce seedlings to support local farmers in expanding agroforestry activities.

In line with Ethiopia's Green Legacy Initiative that was launched in 2019 by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD), which aims to plant billions of seedlings annually, the university is contributing its share through providing scientific methods.

This initiative is driving the region into a green revolution, thereby working to instill this movement as a societal value. For instance, Enemorin Meger Woreda is preparing to plant over 600,000 seedlings this rainy season.

Coffee saplings are among the most demanded by local farmers in the area for economic significances, Faris said, adding the university has nurtured nearly 44,000 coffee seedlings in its nursery centers, which are now being distributed.

In collaboration with local agricultural experts, the university is educating farmers on proper seedling care. Additionally, it is distributing indigenous plant species to reforest degraded lands, he stated.

"As an academic institution with social responsibilities, the university is engaged in projects addressing health and economic issues. Given the area's rich agricultural production, we prioritize agricultural research to improve productivity. Moreover, the Guragic community's esteemed economic culture, particularly in trade, is being integrated into our business and economics curriculum as valuable indigenous knowledge," he noted.

Nation promoting voluntarism to achieve dev't

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

ADDIS ABABA – Promoting voluntary services would save Ethiopia billions of Birr that could be spent to development programs the country proposed to achieve economic growth, Minister of Women and Social Affairs (MoWSA) said.

The Ministry yesterday acknowledged youths who participated in voluntary services in the last three weeks.

During the acknowledgement event, MoWSA Minister Ergogie Tesfaye (PhD) said awarding volunteers and recognizing their contribution is crucial to promote patriotism, teamwork and philanthropy.

Volunteerism is an important tool for promoting peace and friendship among the people, she said, adding that volunteering experiences are vital to advance cooperation and to further know and support each other.

"Voluntary services in Ethiopia could save the country's billions of Birr that could be used for various development programs the country intends to conduct; voluntarism becomes an important component of nation-building," Ergogie said.

She said youths drawn from the four



corners of the country were involved in voluntary services such as planting trees, blood donation, renovating elders' homes, and providing support to low-income families.

Accordingly, she expressed that the acknowledged youths on the event are those who participated in the voluntary service campaign that was started in Arba Minch and wrapped up at Addis Ababa.

"They have recognized for their contribution to their community and the nation at large,"

she said.

Voluntary service has a vital role in connecting the people, strengthening social bonds and leading the country to economic growth with joint efforts, she indicated.

Thousands of young citizens have been providing voluntary services in the rural and urban areas of the country during the rainy season when schools and universities are closed, according to the Minister.

Gov't paying heed to develop SMEs : MoLS

BY MESERET BEHAILU

ADDIS ABABA –The government pays emphasis to create enabled environment for the development of the Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) Ministry of Labor and Skills (MoLS) disclosed.

The above statement was made yesterday by MoLS State Minister Solomon Soka when his institute organized a two day discussion program under the theme: "Livelihoods Improvement for Women and Youth (LIWAY.)"

In his opening remark, Solomon said that the main aims of the discussion is improving the SMEs creating enabled environment to them. It is the way to address women and youth various constraints in terms of SMEs.

As to Solomon, the aforementioned enterprises have a numbers of challenges. Due to this reason, the small and medium enterprises development policy was recently ratified by the Council of the Minister which able to encourage consolidated effort in SMEs field. Skills development, jobs, and creates scientific industry linkage approach with the job seekers and entrepreneurs are also the focused areas of the policy.

"MoLS is working hard in collaborate with stakeholders to encourage entrepreneurs across the country. For instance, over 3.7 million domestic jobs and 345,000 plus overseas jobs were created during the just



ended fiscal budget year," he noted.

Representing from SNV, Netherlands Development Organization, Alemtsehay Ejegu on her part said that various activities have been carrying out in collaborating with the MoLS since 2017.

She added that the new ratified policy would expect to create jobs for over 250,000. Among others increasing the numerical advantages of the SMEs, developing large and medium enterprise, and improving labor skills are the other crucial points of SNV working in close with MoLS.

Furthermore, the policy and strategy requires due to existence of poverty, unfairness, and lack of adequate jobs in SMEs.

Similarly, improving finance accessibility, technology advancement and creativity, ensuring trade development, and reducing shades problem are other parts of the ratified policy that was discussed.

Participants from various states of the country including the finance institutions are in attendant and discussed the policy in the way to showcase practically.

News

University underscores data-driven researches for professional, institutional dev't

BY ASHENAFI ANIMUT

ADDIS ABABA - St. Mary's University (SMU) noted that data and community-driven research findings have valuable contributions towards promoting professional and institutional development.

SMU conducted the 18th National Student Research Forum yesterday under the theme: 'By Students, For Students' in the presence of undergraduate students drawn from various institutions to present their research papers at the premises of its undergraduate campus, multi-purpose hall.

In an exclusive interview with the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA), SMU Research and Knowledge Management Office Director Mathias Shimelis (Asst. Prof.) said that the forum has been serving as a foundational platform that embraces various novel issues that help promote the student's professional development, the community's livelihoods.

The director further underscored that this forum offers a significant opportunity for students to engage in impactful research activities apart from making contribution



to policy makers and researchers' decisions.

Also, the proceedings, including the research papers and proposed recommendations embracing community-driven research outputs promote awareness in the community and financial institutions, and will be disseminated to

the general public, he remarked.

Mentioning the gaps witnessed on the applicability of these research findings, Mathias emphasized the need to take research as part of our daily routine and undertake data-driven decision making processes in every area of engagement.

Lack of streamlined research strategies, resources, political commitment are the possible setbacks hindering research implementation, he stressed.

He said: "The University conducts a wide ranges of issues at international and national multidisciplinary research conferences annually in a bid to enhancing the student's research skill in their curricular activities and meet their skills with the 21st Century."

During the forum, eight research papers showcasing the prospects of capital market, cooperatives, information management system, causes and effects of employee's turnover, and financial performance among many others were thoroughly convened.

Since its establishment in 1998, SMU has been giving due emphasis on research and valuable knowledge sharing undertakings, it was learnt.

Bank unveils...

President of the Bank, Ephrem Mekuria, stated that CBE's digital platform users are growing steadily. In 2018, the number of CBE Birr wallet users was almost 2.2 million; this figure rose to 6.5 million the following year. It has now reached 12 million users, he said.

Customers of the bank have been using the CBE Birr as an alternative digital platform to transact money in addition to the main CBE app, he highlighted.

The service provision using the digital platform has been upgraded to incorporate the latest technologies in the banking and financial system.

Digital Banking subdivision head and Vice President of the Bank, Wogayehu Gebremedihin noted that the bank is transforming the banking culture through digitalization. The mobile app is introducing a new and easier banking culture, even in areas where the conventional banking system is not well-known.

Information Network Security Administration Director and bank board member Tigist Hamid indicated that digital inclusivity should be one of the bank's goals and commended the ongoing processes carried out by the bank.

Most Ethiopians are still excluded from digital banking services; the bank has a responsibility to serve customers through digital platforms, she added.

Gorgora Eco...

requires peace and stability, he called on the warring groups at the far end of the state, to resolve conflicts peacefully.

Likewise, he said all concerned bodies to play due role for lasting peace, which is pivotal in reviving tourism and ensuring economic development in Amhara State.

"Particularly, the weather in many countries is hot at this time whilst

rainy in Ethiopia. Therefore, it is suitable season for attracting foreign tourists in Ethiopia. Due to this reason, making the destinations comfortable for tourists is crucial," he underlined.

Fentaw believed that the Gorgora Eco Resort has high potentials to attract a huge number of visitors and improve the livelihood of the local community and tourism revenue of the country.

Office mobilizes...

Moreover, the office raised over 132.5million Birr and 73.2million Birr from '8100' SMS fundraising platform, and through the Ethiopian Electric Power Gift account respectively. In addition, around 362,150 Birr was gathered from PIN sale, as to him.

On the one hand, the Director indicated that the office has collected some 19,942,519,421.98 Birr for Abbay dam construction since the corner stone was laid till July 7, 2024.

Of which, 18,604,685,725.9 Birr was mobilized from local bond sale and grant, while 1,455,953,251.2Birr gathered from Diaspora bond sale and grant.

Moreover, around 1,009,325,835.5 Birr were collected from different income generating means.

"Starting from the laying of the cornerstone till the end of this budget year, the office was able to raise around 19,942,519,421.98 Birr. It is a clear indication that that the dam is being built with concerted efforts of citizens."

Thus, he urged all Ethiopians and Ethiopian nationals across the globe to continue the support till the construction of the dam is completed.

It is to be recalled that Ethiopia laid the cornerstone of the project in April 2011.

GLI shielding...

within the Nile basin so as to protect water resources and ensure shared growth.

Accordingly, Ethiopia is striving to develop the river basin through undertaking environmental protection activities including planting trees. "Over the past five years, the country has planted more than 8.3 billion tree seedlings within the Nile Basin," he said.

He stressed that the country is implementing the GLI to preserve Nile basin water resources and further develop them.

According to the Minister, Ethiopia is highly committed to achieve mutual development as well as fair utilization of the Nile river waters and this devotion would be enhanced by the implementation of the Nile River Basin Cooperative Framework Agreement (CFA), which poised to promote shared development.

Therefore, the country has performed a successful diplomatic move towards the ratification of the CFA by South Sudan and other riparian countries, he indicated.

Accordingly, he noted that the approval

of the CFA by South Sudan and Burundi parliaments is a big achievement for member countries including Ethiopia.

As to Habtamu, ratifying the CFA is vital to develop the Nile Basin water resources, promote the equitable and reasonable utilization of Nile waters in a sustainable manner.

The ratification of the legal framework by six countries would help to establish the Nile Basin Commission. Moreover, it would enable member countries to cooperate on conserving, protecting and developing

water resources in the basin, he added.

On the other hand, the construction of Abbay Dam is progressing well and the country has set to finalize it in the near future. Turbines' testing is at final stage to commence power generation, Habtamu indicated.

The completion of the dam construction has multifaceted benefits through generating power for industries, transportation, recreation and others, he said, adding that country's hydropower generation capacity is growing through time.

Opinion

Ethiopia's trailblazing approach: A beacon of hope for refugees

BY HIZKEL HAILU

Ethiopia's history as a refuge for those fleeing conflict and persecution predates the modern refugee crisis. The nation's rich cultural tapestry and its adherence to the principle of hospitality have shaped its approach to providing sanctuary for individuals in need. Throughout the years, Ethiopia has welcomed refugees from neighboring countries, including Eritrea, Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan. This legacy of hosting refugees can be traced back to the 1970s, when Ethiopia opened its doors to tens of thousands of people escaping war and political turmoil in countries such as Somalia and Sudan.

Nation's commitment to refugee empowerment is rooted in the belief that refugees possess skills, talents and potential that can contribute to their own well-being and the host communities. The government has adopted a visionary approach that aims to integrate refugees into Ethiopian society, harnessing their abilities for mutual benefit. Central to this vision is the recognition that economic empowerment plays a vital role in fostering self-reliance and dignity among refugees.

The country has a long and proud history of hosting refugees, stemming from its cultural values, historical context and geographical location. In the cultural perspective, Ethiopian society has a deeply ingrained cultural value of hospitality known as "Ethiopian Ubuntu." This concept emphasizes the importance of community, compassion, and generosity towards others, including those in need. The tradition of welcoming strangers and providing refuge to those fleeing persecution aligns with this cultural ethos.

Additionally its history of hosting refugees can be traced back several decades. During the 1970s and 1980s, Ethiopia received a significant influx of refugees from neighboring countries, including Sudan, Somalia, Eritrea, and South Sudan. The country provided shelter, protection, and support to these individuals during times of conflict and political instability. Moreover, Ethiopia's strategic location in the Horn of Africa has made it a natural destination for individuals fleeing from neighboring countries. Its extensive borders and proximity to conflict-affected regions have made Ethiopia a primary entry point for refugees seeking safety.

The nation has also demonstrated its commitment to international refugee law and protection by ratifying key international conventions, including the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol. The country has also enacted domestic laws and policies that outline the rights and responsibilities of refugees and their hosts.

Regarding refugee camps and settlements, the country has further established refugee camps and settlements in appropriate parts of the country to accommodate and provide essential services to displaced individuals. These facilities are often jointly managed by the Ethiopian government, UNHCR, and partner organizations. They offer shelter,

healthcare, education, and livelihood opportunities for refugees.

Cognizant of the fact the issue is so difficult to win it alone, Ethiopia is actively collaborating with international organizations, including the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and various humanitarian NGOs. These partnerships facilitate the provision of humanitarian assistance, capacity building, and advocacy for the rights of refugees.

Ethiopia's long-standing experience in receiving refugees exemplifies its commitment to humanitarian values and solidarity with those in need. Through its cultural values, historical context, and proactive policies, Ethiopia continues to make a positive impact by providing refuge, protection, and opportunities for refugees to rebuild their lives.

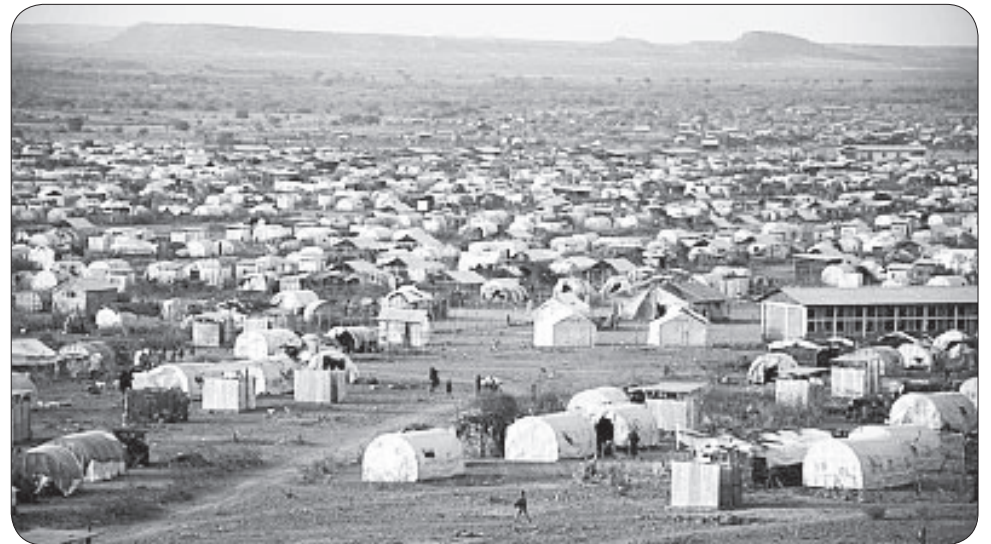
This renowned nation for its rich cultural heritage and historical significance, has also gained recognition for its exceptional commitment to hosting refugees. With a long-standing tradition of providing refuge and hospitality, Ethiopia has become a beacon of hope for thousands of displaced individuals seeking safety, protection, and a chance to rebuild their lives.

World should understand that it is essential to explore Ethiopia's positive contribution in hosting refugees, focusing on its efforts to ensure their inclusion, integration, and empowerment. From receiving a significant influx of Sudanese refugees to the government's progressive policies, Ethiopia's humanitarian legacy shines as an inspiring example of compassion and resilience in the face of adversity.

To this end, the government of Ethiopia is preparing a new bill that would facilitate the employment of foreign refugees in various job opportunities within the country. By creating avenues for refugees to contribute to the local economy, this progressive step not only provides livelihood opportunities but also strengthens social cohesion and promotes cross-cultural understanding. It is a testament to Ethiopia's commitment to harnessing the potential of refugees and recognizing their right to work and contribute to society.

In addition to economic empowerment, Ethiopia places great importance on supporting refugees' access to education, healthcare, and social services. The government, in collaboration with international organizations and non-governmental entities, has implemented innovative programs to address the specific needs of refugees and facilitate their integration.

Ethiopia recognizes the importance of empowering refugees to become self-reliant and contribute to their host communities. The government, in collaboration with international partners, implements various integration and livelihood programs. These initiatives include vocational training, entrepreneurship support, and access to economic opportunities, allowing refugees to rebuild their lives and contribute positively to the local economy.



There are more than 930,000 refugees and asylum seekers residing in Ethiopia

Education holds a key place in Ethiopia's efforts to empower refugees. Inclusive education programs have been established, ensuring that refugee children have access to quality education merged with their Ethiopian peers. These initiatives aim to bridge the educational gap caused by displacement and provide a sense of normalcy and hope for the younger generation.

Furthermore, vocational training programs equip refugees with practical skills that enhance their employability and income-generating potential. By focusing on areas such as agriculture, handicrafts, and technical trades, these programs enable refugees to acquire skills that are not only relevant to their host communities but also valuable for their own self-sufficiency.

The country's commitment to healthcare for refugees is equally significant. Health clinics and facilities have been established in refugee camps and host communities to ensure access to quality healthcare services. This proactive approach addresses the unique health challenges faced by refugees, including disease prevention, maternal and child health, and mental health support.

The nation in this regard prioritizes the provision of education and healthcare services to refugees. In refugee camps and host communities, schools and health clinics are established to ensure access to quality education and healthcare. These efforts aim to minimize the disruption caused by displacement and provide essential services to refugees and their host communities alike.

Ethiopia endeavors to foster social cohesion and peaceful coexistence between refugees and host communities. Efforts are made to promote dialogue, cultural exchange, and collaborative initiatives that bridge divides and foster understanding among diverse populations. This approach contributes to peaceful relationships and mutual support between refugees and their Ethiopian hosts.

While Ethiopia has been commendably hosting refugees from various countries, including Sudan, in a peaceful and supportive manner, it is unfortunate that Ethiopian refugees in other countries are not receiving adequate humanitarian support. This discrepancy highlights the need for greater international attention and assistance to address the plight of Ethiopian refugees who have been forced to flee their homeland.

It is crucial that the international community acknowledges and responds to the challenges faced by these individuals, ensuring that they receive the necessary humanitarian aid and protection they desperately require. Through addressing this disparity, it is better to work towards a more equitable and compassionate approach to refugee assistance, regardless of their country of origin.

All things considered, Ethiopia's remarkable humanitarian legacy stands as a testament to the power of compassion, resilience, and solidarity. The nation's commitment to hosting refugees, empowering them through inclusive policies, and supporting their integration into society is a shining example for the world to emulate.

While acknowledging the positive contributions of Ethiopia, it is essential to address concerns raised by some regarding transparency and information sharing. Open communication and engagement with stakeholders are crucial to ensure that the truth is accessible to all, fostering trust and understanding.

As the global refugee crisis persists, Ethiopia's unwavering commitment to providing sanctuary serves as an inspiration. By opening its doors and embracing those in need, Ethiopia has not only saved lives but also enriched its cultural fabric and strengthened its standing as a champion of humanitarian values.

Ethiopia's commitment to hosting refugees has garnered international recognition and praise. The country has received support from the international community, including financial assistance and technical expertise, in recognition of its efforts to provide sanctuary and support to displaced individuals.

However, recognizing the immense challenges Ethiopia has faced in hosting refugees, the international community ought to offer additional support and solidarity. Collaborative efforts, including financial assistance, capacity building, and knowledge sharing, can contribute to the sustainability of Ethiopia's humanitarian endeavors.

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

Editorial

World-class companies in the making

The reform undertaking of the last few years has lifted Ethiopia's mega public enterprises out of the abyss and is turbocharging them into becoming prestigious world-class companies.

Most of the public enterprises, if not all, were languishing in an abysmal situation resulting from acute mismanagement and were inching closer to biting the dust.

In today's standing, and as reliable sources show, some of Ethiopia's key public enterprises have raised their service standards. Equipping themselves with state-of-the-art technology, adopting innovative practices and building the capacity of their human capital, the enterprises are not only striving to meet the demands of their customers but are also seizing opportunities in the international business environment.

Let's just see their domestic accomplishments. The rate of unbanked population in Ethiopia is dropping due to the reform efforts. Today, bank branches have reached 12, 800 from their previous standing at 5,400. Saving accounts have climbed into around 100 million from a previous 38 million. Likewise, the number of mobile bank users has shown a sharp upturn to around 47 million.

The services of some of the enterprises such as Ethio telecom and Commercial Bank of Ethiopia (CBE) are not limited to the territories of Ethiopia, just to name a few. The former makes life easier and convenient in South Sudan. The latter is also providing financial services in both Djibouti and South Sudan. The efficiency of Ethiopian Electric Power that is tasked with energy generation, and Ethiopian Electric Utility which is responsible for power distribution, is benefiting neighboring countries.

What is more, the pan-African Ethiopian Airlines that have been stretching wings in the skies of Africa have continued connecting Africans among themselves and with the rest of the world. The flag-carrier has made its maiden flights this year to Warsaw (Poland), Freetown (Sera Leon) and Maun (Botswana). The proud African airliner connects peoples, cultures and economies with its vast passenger and cargo destinations. The airliner serves 65 destinations in Africa, 24 destinations in Europe, 12 destinations in the Americas, 25 destinations in Asia and 13 destinations in the Middle East. The Ethiopian Airlines innovative cargo supplies during the pandemic (Covid-19) have already been ingrained in the memories of the global community.

Ethiopia, since long ago, has invested not only in areas that positively impact the lives of its citizens but its enterprises, projects and initiatives also know no bounds. The development feats that Ethiopians achieve at home are benefiting neighboring countries and the wider Africa in general.

Unless African institutions feed on each other in all respects, it is tough for the people of Africa to see a peaceful and prosperous continent at the end of the day.

The institutions, in addition to their very purposes, can also serve as centers of excellence. The efficacy of an institution in one sub-region, for instance, should serve as a springboard to create similar entities in the rest of Africa. The experiences could be emulated and scaled up in the other sub-regions. Indeed, the Ethiopian public enterprises mentioned above are providing cross-border services. Over and beyond, the accomplishments of public enterprises in Ethiopia could be learned elsewhere in Africa.

Strong and sustainable institutions are the right ingredients that catapult our continent to desired levels. As it is highlighted in the aspirations of Africans expressed in Agenda 2063, Africa wants "capable institutions and transformative leadership in place at all levels." There is also a plan to realize world-class infrastructure aimed at making Africans trade among themselves. The goal is to reach intra-African trade 50% by 2045 from 12% in 2013. Hence, building the capacity of African institutions must be a task that should come at the top of the list of African states' priorities.

While there is room for improvement for these pan-African institutions, there seems to have erupted a coordinated attack against these enterprises. The bottom line is- Africa's and its institutions agency are not houses made on sand, they are being founded on a rock base.



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The Ethiopian Herald

Opinion

An alleyway to achieve national consensus

BY GIRMACHEW GASHAW

When a task is completed through consultation, there are no complaints, grievances, or negative thoughts. Ultimately, the task becomes enjoyable and rewarding for all involved.

There are some Ethiopians who work against the benefit of their country, causing internal issues and making the country a laughingstock or promoting hatred from others, resulting in economic losses and backward progress. The driving force behind these actions by Ethiopia's enemies is to fill their pockets with money which has long been a major factor in Ethiopia's instability.

Instead of contributing to resolving differences in a civilized manner, those who were unable to gain power democratically resorted to violence, which is unacceptable. Some of these individuals are Ethiopian by blood, but the harm they have caused far exceeds that of external enemies.

Since Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) came to power, he has implemented comprehensive reforms for the country. All Ethiopians, including those who considered themselves opposition parties or were forced to leave the country due to political disagreements, are encouraged to return and share their ideas across the political spectrum.

The government recognizes that being an opponent is not the same as being an enemy. Even those who were imprisoned due to ideological differences have been released and are now able to contribute to the country's democratic process.

However, some have returned to their previous ways and are tarnishing the country's reputation, while others are taking advantage of the available democratic platforms. This in one way or another contributes positively or negatively to both the unity of the people and the steady economic growth of the country.

From the start, the government has avoided unnecessary conflicts and has peacefully resolved differences, as violence benefits no one. Prime Minister Abiy (PhD) has consistently met with opposition political parties to discuss bilateral issues.

In addition to consulting on various national issues, the government is facilitating conditions for national dialogue, ensuring transitional justice, and implementing programs to address differences.

Despite efforts to unite citizens, some anti-peace elements are acting irrationally. There are still those who seek to tarnish the reputation of major Ethiopian institutions, such as Ethiopian Airlines, Commercial Banks, and Ethio Telecom. It is important to understand that these institutions are vital to the country and have helped stabilize the economy. While it is understandable to have issues with individuals, defaming these institutions is not acceptable behavior.

When faced with challenging situations, the government handles things patiently, as resorting to military action does not benefit anyone. Looking back at past experiences, it is clear that war has not been a solution to the challenges faced. The two-year conflict with the TPLF was resolved through negotiation, saving the country from unnecessary spending on weapons.

The root cause of our current differences is a difference in narratives. Ethiopians, partners, and others must work together to build a common narrative for moving forward. Partners assisting in national dialogue and reconciliation processes are appreciated for their crucial role in resolving conflicts.

Those in the diaspora must understand that Ethiopia is their homeland, and they must make sacrifices for its stability and peace. By addressing Ethiopia's issues and contributing to the satisfaction of Ethiopians, the diaspora can help bring peace at all levels.

Neighboring countries also understand that unity is essential for overcoming rivals, and isolation leads to loss. In addition to addressing internal issues, doors should be opened for dialogue and the exchange of ideas to strengthen political, economic, and social cohesion.

Ethiopia is engaged in a national dialogue and justice process that aims to be inclusive and free from government interference. If successful, it will bring peace and economic stability to Ethiopia, the second most populous country in East Africa. All stakeholders should contribute to its success.

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

Business & Economy

ECTA spearheading Ethiopian coffee's global expansion

BY ADDISALEM MULAT

It is clear that coffee exports play a huge role in generating income for Ethiopia. Inexpensive and served everywhere, on any occasion, coffee is a powerful factor in promoting conviviality and social relations. In the capital, Addis Ababa, and every other city in the country, one can drink coffee on the street, on the pavement, sitting on a little stool, and catching up on neighborhood news. One can also find it in luxury international hotels and airports, where the preparation ritual is performed on a little stage, according to an article.

The article goes on to say the mistress of the house can show off her skills, while young women get an opportunity to be noticed. The streets of towns and villages are filled with the fragrant fumes of home-roasted coffee, mingled with the scent of burning incense. Coffee is so irresistible that it is said to attract invisible genies, which are appeased by the purifying properties of the incense. Fresh herbs and flowers are scattered on the ground as a sign of welcome.

It is widely believed that the Ethiopian Coffee and Tea Authority (ECTA) has been discharging a wide spectrum of fruitful activities that can take the country's economy to the next level of accomplishment. As Ethiopia has been working around the clock with the purpose of taking the sector to new heights and putting into effect various effective strategies, the envisioned target has been accomplished and is heading in the right direction.

In the same way, by exporting coffee to various nations worldwide, the country has been earning a large amount of money breathing life every so often into Ethiopia's economy. ECTA disclosed that the country has earned 1.43 billion USD from exporting 298,500 tons of coffee during 2023/24 fiscal year.

Briefing journalists recently, ECTA Director General, Adugna Debela (PhD) said that this year's export volume has seen a 50,000 tons of coffee product increment compared with the same period last year.

According to the Director General, the country had secured 218 million USD by supplying 46,000 tons of coffee to the world market last June alone. Of this, 90% of the activity was done through vertical integration strategy.

"Utilizing the vertical integration approach helps to provide world standard coffee to the international market, avoid bureaucratic red tape, and ensures farmers benefit. Though a number of challenges are existed such as the Red Sea problem, lack of containers, and logistics constraints, it has gained remarkable revenue from coffee even exporting through airlines cargo," he added.

Adugna recalled that some 1.42 billion USD revenue had been obtained last year from exported coffee. It means that this year's revenue is the first of its kind in the history of country's coffee export, he said.

He further stated that Saudi Arabia and China respectively have imported 55,000 and 25,000 tons of coffee in the just ended Ethiopian fiscal



Ethiopia's best quality coffee

year.

He also noted that the U.S, Germany, Belgium, Japan, Spain, and Saudi Arabia are the leading countries of Ethiopian coffee destinations.

Speaking to the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA), ECTA Public Relations and Chief Communication Officer Shalemariam Gebremedhin stated that the stated amount was gained from over 43,481 tons of coffee export in last May. During the past 11 months, over 252,466.98 tone of coffee was exported and the nation has gained 1,208,073,000 USD in return.

Compared with the past three consecutive years, the export performance is said to register upsurge. Besides the emphasis given by the government, the active participation of farmers, suppliers, exporters and other key actors in the coffee sector have contributed to the growing performance.

Highlighting activities that the Authority has been undertaking to enhance productivity and address challenges related to market, Shalemariam noted that promising results have been gained in creating smooth purchasing system.

"The fact that the marketing opportunities have been varied, it has contributed to address the sector's challenges."

The price of more than 80 to 90% of the export coffee is being set by suppliers and exporters. Hence, the direct market linkage created few years back, not only allowed to increase quantity but it had also played vital role in ensuring quality in the coffee sector," the officer stressed.

With regard to expanding market destinations, Shalemariam mentioned that the ECTA has put in place various strategies in sustaining the already existing market destinations as well as exploring new ones. Thus, it has explored new destinations including China, UAE, Taiwan, Japan and Sudan, among others.

Similar efforts have been exerted in maintaining the existing market destinations, promoting Ethiopian coffee through taking part on

international exhibitions, as well as in coffee cup of excellence. Moreover, the authority will continue providing follow up and support on coffee exporters and closely work with state bureaus and concerned institutions, he remarked.

Director General of the Authority, Adugna Debela, revealed recently to local media that an impressive 460 million seedlings have been cultivated to bolster production.

The current fiscal year has seen the establishment of expansive tea plantations spanning 30,000 hectares, a significant leap from the previous concentration of tea production in just 5,000 hectares across Wushwush and Gumero.

Despite exporting 950 tons of premium processed tea leaves and generating 2.1 million USD in foreign currency within the 11 months of this fiscal year—a substantial 50,000-ton increase from the previous year—Adugna emphasized that Ethiopia has only scratched the surface of its potential in the tea industry.

The limited involvement of investors in the sector has constrained Ethiopia's ability to capitalize on its abundant resources and generate substantial foreign exchange, he said, adding annual earnings from tea exports have yet to surpass the 3 million USD mark, highlighting the vast untapped potential of the industry.

ECTA Deputy Director-General Shafi Oumer highlighted that the competition provides a platform for smallholder farmers to showcase their unique coffees to a global audience, thereby enhancing their livelihoods and preserving the rich heritage of Ethiopian coffee.

ENCA President Hussein Ambo (PhD) remarked on the deep cultural significance of coffee in Ethiopian social life.

Hussein emphasized that the competition improves coffee production and quality, creates awareness among smallholder farmers, and ensures sustainability in both the marketplace and for farmers by providing significant revenue, quality incentives, market access, and broader economic growth. He acknowledged

challenges such as competition between large farms and export companies, limited awareness, and logistical issues faced by Ethiopian farmers.

In a similar vein, USAID Ethiopia Deputy Mission Director Tim Stein praised Ethiopia as one of the world's top coffee producers, known for its unique flavor and aroma profiles. He stated that the US government, along with USAID and the United States Department of Agriculture, is working with Ethiopian coffee farmers, graders, and exporters to build a robust coffee sector. USAID is supporting the training and recertification of Ethiopian graders to ensure the sector's growth.

It is recalled that the 20th African Fine Coffees Conference and Exhibition and the First African Coffee Week 2024 kicked off in the recent past at the Millennium Hall, in Addis Ababa.

A four-day conference was co-organized by the three African coffee-based organizations, namely, the Inter African Coffee Organization, the Robusta Coffee Agency of Africa and Madagascar, and the African Fine Coffee Association, according to information obtained from the Ethiopian News Agency.

The annual conference brought together around 2,000 regional and international coffee roasters, traders, producers, buyers, and professionals under one roof to discuss policies, sustainability, and access to finance, coffee competitions and other actions.

Considering Ethiopia as one of the major global coffee producers, this conference is a great testament being convened in Ethiopia to recognize the country's potential for coffee development, it was indicated.

Opening the conference, Chairman of Inter African Coffee Organization (IACO) and Ethiopian Minister of Agriculture Girma Amente said the conference is a pivotal platform for knowledge exchange and experience sharing.

Acknowledging the role of coffee in empowering the economy, Girma said the government of Ethiopia has prioritized coffee as one of valuable economic growth engines and is committed to supporting the sector.

Massive reforms have also been implemented to resolve the challenges being witnessed in the sector both globally and locally, he indicated.

Ethiopian Coffee and Tea Authority Director-General said on his part, the establishment of new reforms and the amendment of regulations have been resulting in a positive impact in the Ethiopian coffee sector.

He also underlined the need for enhancing the participation of the private sector that would significantly transform the coffee development sector.

African Coffee Week is crucial to further advocate the coffee sector, Secretary General of Inter Africa Coffee Organization (IACO), Ambassador Solomon Rutega said.

Expressing the continued commitment of IACO to support the coffee sector, the secretary general said, "We can navigate any challenges together. Ethiopia hosted the event for the fourth time as the East African nation is one of Africa's specialty coffee countries."

Art & Culture

The emerging creative metal artworks

BY GIRMACHEW GASHAW

Any object on earth can be considered a form of art or a source of inspiration for creating an art piece. Materials such as stone, wood, metal, mud and paint are among the tools used by artists.

As a child, I once traveled through a jungle at night and encountered a frightening object that made me think of a hyena. I immediately turned back instead of continuing on my journey. It turned out that the object was just a tree stump, created by a tree cutter. This experience made me realize that objects of an ordinary day can be seen as an art piece.

Artists are now using metal to create a wide variety of movable objects. Metal is a crucial material that is used to make many objects we use in our daily lives. The properties of metal are unique compared to other materials used in crafting.

Various metals, such as iron, bronze, lead, silver, gold and alloys, can be used to create artwork. Metal art is commonly found in home doors, buildings, fences and more. Metal sculpting involves pouring liquid metal into molds to create sculptures and other items. Copper, brass, bronze and aluminum are commonly used materials for this process.

Ancient civilizations used metal primarily for practical purposes, such as crafting tools and weapons. As civilizations developed, so did their metallurgical techniques. Today, in Ethiopia, startups are creating metal artworks that represent the country's historical heritage and attract tourists. Teketay Creative Works is one such company that produces unique metal art pieces.

Saron Girma is a representative for the metal artworks brand, Teketay. She has displayed metal creative arts in various international hotels. Recently, the writer of this piece had the chance to visit her artworks displayed at the Hilton Hotel. She is dedicated to promoting the metal artworks popularizing it to both tourists and residents.

When approached by *The Ethiopian Herald*, Saron briefed us about her company's workday and night. They started creating art almost two years ago. The idea came about through her friend, Abynur Solomon, who assessed his resources at the time. He had family members who specialized in metal sourcing and production under the Netsa Trading PLC.

She explained that Abynur Solomon is a person with an artistic bent. At Teketay Creative Works, all are creative individuals. He plans how to utilize the



Metal is a crucial material that is used to make many objects we use in our daily lives. The properties of metal are unique compared to other materials used in crafting

metal sheets available optimally and transform them into something new. So, he imported the necessary machines, and that is how Teketay Creative Works came to be. Today, they offer metal table artwork, metal wall art products, and various unique pieces.

Art is a unique form of expression, she said, adding that it allows you to showcase your preferences and dislikes.

Group members found a new medium to express themselves through metal. With metal, they can create sturdy, powerful artwork that stands out in a home. Metal art is not as common as canvas art; it's bolder and stronger, which is what they appreciate about it.

When asked what inspired them to

engage in such artwork, she replied that they had a desire to create stronger, sturdier artwork. Art has always been a significant part of her life, especially with her father's influence. Her family, particularly on her paternal side, has a deep appreciation for art. They used to travel to Ghana and South Africa, where they encountered various art forms.

Art has always been present in their home, and she has cherished it since childhood. She remembers playing with her dad's African masks. Often, she was captivated by them. Her love for art led her to pursue a career with a brand that introduces art in a new medium, which has been an incredible opportunity for her.

As a startup, they aim to have their artwork in every household. They want to showcase their uniqueness and customization capabilities to everyone. The name Teketay Creative Works reflects their commitment to cater to their customers' desires to create unique art pieces. Their ultimate goal is to be recognized globally and be known for their customizable art that appeals to a wide audience.

In addition to their current artworks, they specialize in creating metal pieces on a larger scale, such as stairway railings and wall facades. Their advice for young people looking to innovate is to dedicate themselves, study the market, and pursue what they love. Finding a niche in the market that aligns with your passion will drive your success. The cost of starting a business varies depending on the industry and requires thorough market research to estimate accurately.

Times are changing, and opportunities in the art industry are expanding. Saron encourages parents and individuals to embrace the evolving landscape and consider pursuing creative endeavors.

In a nutshell, the stigma around art as a career choice is upturning, and there are ample opportunities for success in the industry. It is essential to adapt to the changing times and explore new possibilities for growth.

Science & Technology

Incessant initiatives in developing AI technology in Ethiopia



Worku Gachena (PhD), Director General, Ethiopian Artificial Intelligence Institute

BY DARGIE KAHSAY

The developing world remained behind during the first, second and third technological revolutions. As a result, countries of the developing world remain poor and dependent on the technology of developed countries. As the world has observed, technology has become the backbone of economic development. It also accelerates the prosperity of countries. Hence, investing in technology is not an option for third-world countries, but a key priority.

The world is entering into the fourth technological revolution, thanks to the scientists in the sector. The expansion of the internet and the emergence of artificial intelligence (AI) are transforming the technology industry. Hence, despite the developing countries remaining behind during the first three technological revolutions, using their latecomer advantage, it is critically high time for the developing countries to become part of the fourth technological revolution. Investing in technology to become part of the revolution and to exploit the gains of the industry is a timely action for developing countries, especially for African countries.

In this regard, Ethiopia during the past five years has had a special focus on the development of the technology sector, including the emerging technologies. The government's attention to the sector improves infrastructural investments, creating institutions and reforming policies and strategies that accelerate the development of technology.

Understanding the role and development of AI technology early, Ethiopia has given special attention to AI technology during the past five years. It has established a national AI institute, AI center and a month ago, Ethiopia's Council of Ministers adopted the National Artificial Intelligence Policy (AI Policy), for the first time. The adoption of the AI Policy by the council of ministers is a new chapter for the development of AI technology in Ethiopia, Ethiopian Artificial Intelligence Institute (EAII) Director General, Worku Gachena (PhD) told *The Ethiopian Herald* last week. *The Ethiopian Herald* approached Worku while he commenced the third batch AI Summer Camp at the Science Museum, here in the capital.

Ethiopian Artificial Intelligence Institute (EAII), a young institution itself started AI Summer Camp to cultivate talented youths in Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology and launched it three years ago. As part of its strategy to develop AI technology in Ethiopia, the institute in addition to investing in infrastructure and policy and reforms, gives due attention to human



Participants of the 2024 AI Summer Camp commencement ceremony at the Science Museum

resource development in the sector. With this initiative, EAII started the first AI Summer Camp in 2022 by accepting 13 talented youths. It increased its capacity to 30 youths during the second batch AI Summer Camp in 2023. And, this year, EAII announced on Saturday that it is ready to accept 200 youths during this year's AI Summer Camp training.

Yoseph Leulseged was among the first batch of youths who joined the AI Summer Camp in 2022. After he applied online and took an entrance exam, he joined the camp and took the training for more than two months. Approached by *The Ethiopian Herald*, Yoseph stated he had the passion to know about AI before he joined the AI Summer Camp. Later, after he got the chance for the training, he developed his knowledge and skills in AI technology and its functions. "The Summer Camp training helped me to translate my passion into practical knowledge and skills," Yoseph said adding that he continues developing his skills in AI technology.

As to him, the training focuses on business plan, coding, IOT, machine learning, python programming, and robotics and he said that he specialized in IOT. While graduating from the AI Summer Camp, with other three trainees, he conducted an IOT-based project, where they currently are working to change the project into a product working with a private institution. "Our IOT project was Smart Blind Stick which focuses on producing smart stick that supports blind people," Yoseph said adding the project was a group project, where a group of four trainees jointly created it.

Currently, they are working with Addis Tech Company, a private company, to change their project into a product. As to him, they already signed the agreement to produce the product and the process of producing the

product is on its way. In addition to the Smart Blind Stick project, Yoseph is working with Addis Tech to produce another IOT project of his own, Addis Nano, an IOT product that is the first of its type for Ethiopia. The Addis Nano product, according to him, will be joining the market within two months and he is also working with Addis Tech Company to realize Addis Nano.

For the future, Yoseph's dream is to specialize in AI technology. He is a grade 12 complete youth and takes his grade 12 national exam. He is dreaming of joining Software Engineering in his higher education institution to develop his knowledge of AI technology.

Yididya Tadele for her part joined the second batch AI Summer Camp in 2023. She stated that the training equipped her with theoretical and practical knowledge and skills concerning AI technology. She learnt about the features and functions of AI during her stay in the camp. "We have learned about IOT, machine learning, machine learning, robotics and other related topics," Yididya told *The Ethiopian Herald*. As to her, in addition to developing her knowledge and skills on AI technology and its roles, the training helped her to develop other skills and also helped her in her regular class.

Yidida said that the training helped her to diversify and develop her knowledge and skills in the technology sector. After graduating from the camp, she continues developing her skills in AI as the training opens a new door for her. She is following online courses and skills development courses after the training. She said that "it gives me a new insight towards science and technology." Yididya has continued working on her AI projects that she started during the summer camp training and continues contacting EAII experts to discuss the

progress of her projects and to seek support. Yoseph and Yididya call on the youth generation to give due focus to science and technology to cultivate and develop their talents. As to them, the youth generation should exploit the existing opportunities like the AI Summer Camp and related opportunities to develop their science and technology knowledge.

Continuing its efforts of cultivating the talents of the youth generation, EAII commenced the third round AI Summer Camp 2024 training last week by accepting 200 youths and developed its accepting capacity from 30 last year to 200 this year. EAII Director General, Worku Gachena during the commencement ceremony stated that AI technology and its role are developing surprisingly. Hence, as to him, countries must be part of this development adding Ethiopia is continued investing in developing AI technology and to exploit its potential benefits.

Worku noted that the Ethiopian government is undertaking a continuous series of initiatives to implement and endorse technology for socio-economic development. In this regard, building a competitive domestic AI industry prioritizing national security is among the key initiatives in the technology sector and EAII is undertaking various measures to realize the national vision.

As part of the national effort to adopt AI technology, the institute gives due attention to in investing the youth generation to sensitize concerned bodies about AI to develop skilled human resources. This year, the institute accepted 200 youths to train them on various topics of AI for over two months, the Director General said adding that Python processing, IOT, machine learning, robotics, and other courses will be given to the trainees by more than 40 technology professionals from Ethiopia and from abroad.

Society

Equipping youth with necessary skills, for better future

BY LEULSEGED WORKU

Ethiopia, as a country that aspires to attain vibrant economic prosperity, is aggressively working to equip its human capital with the required knowledge and skills and fill the demands that the labor market needs

In this regard, to turn the ambition into a reality and achieve the set goals, the government has given prime attention to strengthening technical and vocational education and training institutes and is working accordingly.

This has also been reflected in various initiatives and programs. The government has been working closely with industry partners and education institutes by promoting university-industry linkage targeting to enhance the quality and relevance of training. Devising a curriculum that aligns with the needs of the manufacturing sector and efforts carried out to improve infrastructure, upgrade equipment and provide hands-on training opportunities to students have also been the other interventions undertaken to achieve the goals.

As centers of excellence, these institutions are not only places where skilled manpower is produced and local market demands are addressed; but they are also potential areas that enable the country to respond effectively to its challenges and enable it to ensure its future direction to prosperity.

As indicated by Deputy Speaker of the HoPR, Lomi Bedo, skill-based training has a key role in developing and upgrading the skills and knowledge of individuals to contribute to their country. In this regard, the Labor and Skills Ministry should keep its momentum in producing competent human power; capable of competing both locally as well as the international labor market. "Producing qualified and competitive professionals should be the priority agenda of Labor and Skills Ministry."

During the discussion with members of the House of People's Representatives and the Ministry, the Deputy Speaker stressed the value of education and training institutes in producing a competent and proficient society and a prosperous nation.

Lomi also indicated that following its progressive reform, the government is aggressively working to produce skillful citizens who are capable enough to meet local demands by substituting imported goods with locally produced items, which have a key role in minimizing the country's foreign currency expenditure to importation. In this regard, technical and vocational education and training institutes are playing a significant role in



As Ethiopia continues its journey towards economic prosperity, the focus on developing the manufacturing sector through technical and vocational training remains critical

filling the market gap. The Ministry is also exerting effort in creating job opportunities and supporting the growing manufacturing sector. This effort should be strengthened, she said.

Seconding the view of the Deputy House Speaker, Labor and Skills Minister, Muferiyat Kamil, said that due to the aggressive efforts of the government together with its stakeholders fruitful results were witnessed within the past years. This is especially true in producing skilled manpower, creating job opportunities for several citizens; and creating a conducive environment for industrialization.

Regarding supplying skilled manpower to the growing manufacturing sector and creating opportunities for citizens to access international job opportunities, the Ministry is also discharging its responsibility by working closely with technical and vocational education training institutes.

Muferiyat also expressed her optimistic view to ensure better results in the coming year by scaling up the best experiences of the preceding year as well as applying new prospects.

More attention will be given to polytechnic colleges to provide training that primarily gives attention to technology and the value chain. In this regard, as a means to transfer technical and vocational centers to centers of excellence, a direction has been set to implement digitalization in 100 polytechnic colleges; and 86 of them are implementing the system at different levels, she added.

There is a plan to transfer technical and vocational institutions to a digital system and build independent institutions that will be administered in their own capacity within the next three years. According to her, skills development, job opportunities; and creating conducive environment for the industry require the active involvement and cooperation of all parties. Thus, she urged the Council to provide the necessary

support.

As the experiences of almost all developed nations show, investment in technical and vocational education training centers has incalculable economic rewards not only by creating job opportunities for their citizens but also by enhancing their competitiveness enabling them to penetrate into the global market.

Ethiopia has set ambitious goals to achieve rapid economic growth and prosperity. One key area of focus in this endeavor is the advancement of the manufacturing sector, which is seen as a crucial engine for job creation, boosting productivity and promoting innovation, and at the end of the day realizing overall economic development. To advance this growing sector and attain its ambitions, Ethiopia has placed a strong emphasis on enhancing the capacity of technical and vocational training centers.

By investing in this sector, the government is working determinedly to substitute imports, satisfy local demand, boost exports, and enhance the earnings of hard currency by providing young people with practical and valuable skills that enable them to compete and penetrate the labor market.

In this respect, it is known that the manufacturing sector not only has the potential to provide employment opportunities for the burgeoning youth population in the country but also to generate significant revenue. Equipping these institutions in every possible way plays a vital role in empowering individuals with the practical skills and knowledge needed to thrive in various areas. By offering specialized training programs for students, these centers can meaningfully help bridge the skills gap and ensure that the workforce is well-prepared to meet the demands of the evolving job market.

Indeed, as it was indicated by the Deputy House Speaker and Labor and Skills Minister, professionals that are competitive in local as well as at the international markets have key roles in addressing the needs of the manufacturing sector.

As Ethiopia continues its journey towards economic prosperity, the focus on developing the manufacturing sector through technical and vocational training remains critical. While significant progress has been made so far, challenges such as funding constraints, curriculum alignment, and access to quality training facilities still need to be addressed. By overcoming these challenges and sustaining efforts, Ethiopia is poised to realize its vision of flourishing the manufacturing sector that drives economic growth and creates opportunities for its people.



This is Ethiopia



Reviving tourism to stimulating rapid economic growth

BY MENGESTEAB TESHOME

Tigray is one of the States endowed with several tourist attractions. Ranging from stunning landscapes to historical, cultural, and religious attractions, the State has a lot to offer to visitors.

The Obelisk of Axum, dating back 1,700 years, the Gheralta Rock, the ancient rock-hewn churches of which some have been built within high caves, like the Abune Yemata Guh and Abreha and Atsbeha, Medhane Alem Adi Kesho churches as well as Yeha Archaeological Site, are some of the attractions that have the power to entice the mind of the soul of visitors.

The Church of Saint Mary of Zion, which houses the sacred Ark of the Covenant and holds special religious importance for the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, and the Orthodox Christians as a place of pilgrimage as well as the renowned Adwa Mountain where the Fascist Italy forces were beaten by the Ethiopian forces in the late 19th century are the other blessings that make the State a unique place for visitors.

In fact, following the conflict that lasted close to two years, the State's tourism activity had been weakened and the number of tourists flocking into the area had declined.

However, following the peace agreement signed in Pretoria, South Africa, and the works carried out by the government and Tigray State's Culture and Tourism Bureau to reinvigorate and promote the tourism sector, encouraging results are witnessed.

These days, the number of tourists coming to Tigray and visiting the State's tourist attractions is increasing significantly.

According to information from the

Culture and Tourism Bureau of the Interim Regional Administration of Tigray State, after the unwavering support and effort by the federal government, stakeholders, and the Bureau to revive and promote the State's tourism sector, the flow of tourists is increasing from time to time.

Because of the effort to stimulate State's tourism sector, currently over twenty associations that comprise members ranging from 45 to 65 are operating actively.

As Bureau's Qualification and Evaluation Director Yemane Gedilu told Ethiopian News Agency, the federal government along with the stakeholders and pertinent bodies is discharging its responsibilities to introduce the State's historical and cultural tourist destinations to revive the sector, attract tourists and generate considerable income.

He also mentioned that the restoration of peace and stability within the State and the reconstruction and service resumption of the Aksum Airport have contributed significantly to increasing the influx of tourists.

Due to the provision of support given by the federal government, in the past six months, starting from January to July 2024 over five thousand international foreign tourists have visited the State's ancient historical places and other tourist destinations.

In the stated period, tourists visited the most preferred destinations such as the Mountain Chains of Gheralta, and historical, cultural, natural, and religious spots located in Aksum, Mekelle, and Temben, he added.

Mentioning that the length of stay of tourists in the destination is crucial to benefit better, he said that a foreign tourist on average stays for five days and spends

about 450 USD for transport, food, and the like services.

According to him, aside from the daily expenditures that tourists spend, they are benefiting local communities who are preparing cultural food and those engaging in selling cultural attires, souvenirs, and the like materials.

Equally important, due to the restoration of peace and security in the State, around 200 licensed tour guides have commenced giving services. Moreover, thirty-one qualified hotels are providing standard tourist services, he added.

"Especially, hotels located around Mekelle and Woquro towns are engaged in providing services to tourists as the influx of tourists in these areas is growing than ever before."

The revival of the tourism industry in Tigray has also helped twenty private tour operators with 45 to 65 members each engaged in providing services.

Aksum Tour Guider Coordinator Solomon Gebretsadik for his part noted that because historical sites are opened and the Aksum Airport has resumed its services, the number of tourists is growing from time to time.

This in turn is helping the local community and the youth residing around Axum Town to engage in income-generating activities by promoting the area's untapped tourist potential.

The other beneficiary from the flow of tourists, Gebremedhin Tesfay said, "Because of the emphasis given to State's tourism resource by the government, stakeholders and concerned bodies, the number of local and international tourists coming to visit the historical and cultural places is increasing. Consequently, we are benefiting meaningfully from the sector."

It is to be recalled that Tourism State Minister Sileshi Girma and the President of the Interim Administration of Tigray State Getachew Reda launched Tigray State's tourism stimulation initiative late in December 2024.

Everyone knows tourism is a vital component of the global economy, generating trillions of dollars in economic activity each year. It is one of the world's largest and fastest-growing industries, with far-reaching impacts across many sectors.

For instance, its economic impact is tremendous in many ways. Reports coming out from countries put the tourism industry as a major driver of economic growth. Because of its direct impacts, it could help to generate jobs in accommodations, transportation, food service, recreation, and other travel-related sectors. It also has significant indirect economic impacts, stimulating business in supporting industries like construction, retail, and manufacturing. Tourists spend money at local businesses, which helps create jobs and income in the communities they visit.

According to the World Travel and Tourism Council, the tourism industry accounted for over 9 trillion USD in global economic activity and 330 million jobs worldwide in 2022. In many countries, tourism is one of the largest contributors to GDP. It is especially important for developing economies, where it can be a major source of foreign investment and tax revenue.

Experts in the field of tourism agree that effectively stimulating tourism requires a comprehensive approach that involves collaboration between the public and private sectors, strategic planning, investment in infrastructure and marketing, and a focus on sustainability and community engagement.