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Why all eyes on CFA ratification

BY YESUF ENDRIS

Following the ratification of the Cooperation Framework Agreement (CFA) of the Nile Basin Initiative by South Sudan, politicians and hydro-politics scholars are anticipating a new dynamism in Nile River politics - in the region historically marked by river water disputes.

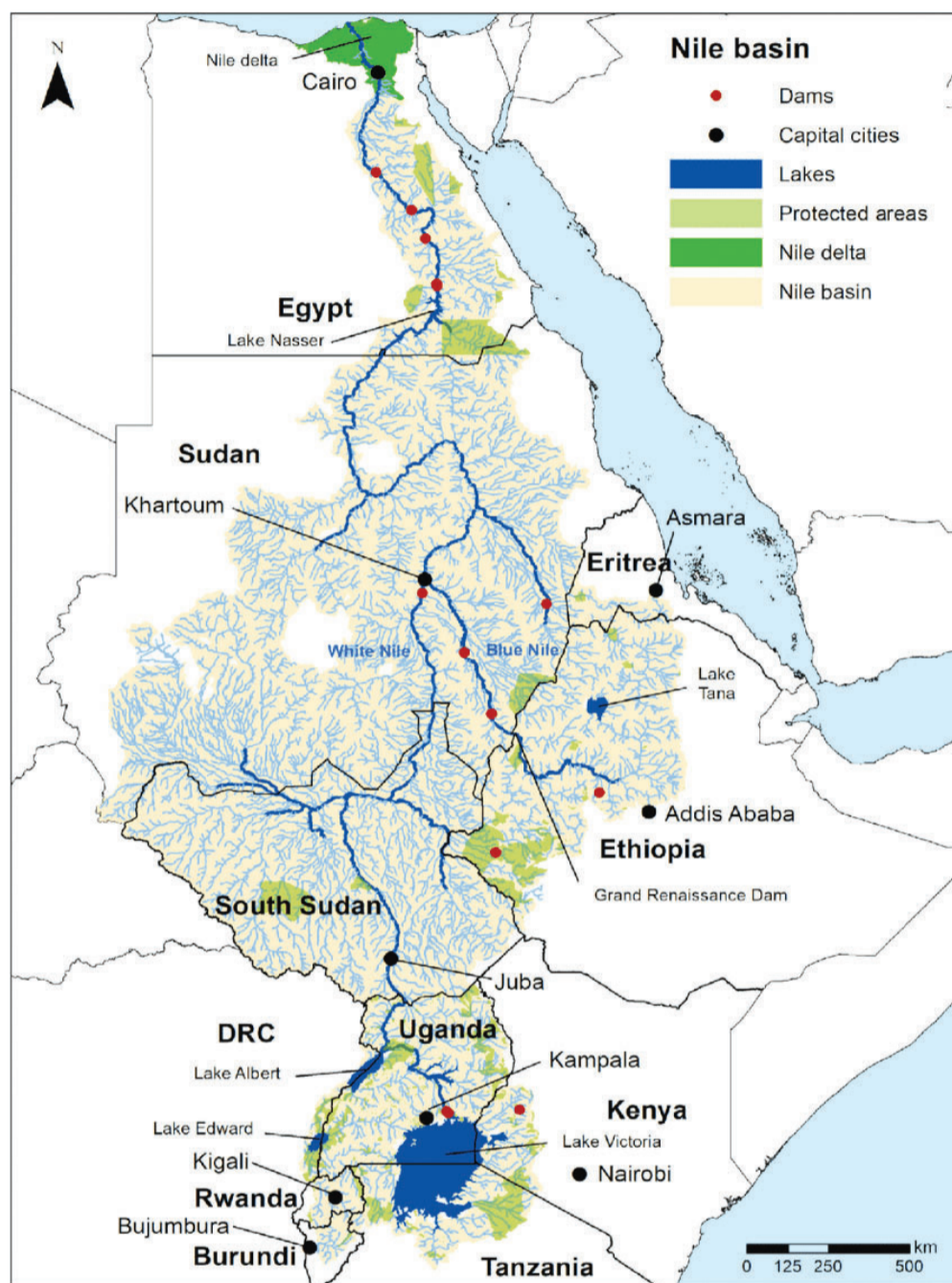
Subsequent to the CFA ratification by South Sudanese parliament, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) posted on X that it is a historic moment and a milestone in the collective aspiration for regional cooperation in the Nile Basin.

Ethiopia, the largest contributor of water to the Nile River, has been advocating for a collaborative framework based on equitable water utilization, whereas Egypt and Sudan have opposed this move. Out of 11 riparian countries, only Egypt and Sudan have excluded themselves from the Nile Basin Initiative, which has been active for more than a decade.

The Nile Basin Initiative is moving forward becoming a commission that will implement joint agreements. Speaking to the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA), hydro-politics scholars and international politics analysts indicated that Nile basin politics is likely to see tangible resolutions and cooperation mechanisms as six countries have ratified the long-awaited CFA.

"Earlier agreements signed between and among Nile basin countries impacted the equitability of water utilization. As basin countries establish the regional water

See why all eyes... Page 3



ATI ramping up efforts towards green economy

• To plant 1.3 mln avocado seedlings

BY ASHENAFI ANIMUT

ADEA (EAST SHEWA)- In line with the national Green Legacy Initiative (GLI), the Ethiopian Agricultural Transformation Institute (ATI) is effectively implementing the initiative to enhance the productivity of agricultural systems and climate ecosystem.

ATI staffs drawn from the headquarters and regional transformation centers undertaken yesterday tree plantation program in East Shewa Zone, Adea Woreda, Godino Jitu kebele under the theme: "A planting nation, sustaining generation".

ATI CEO Mandefro Nigussie (PhD) stated that the institute is implementing the program through streamlined clusters in various parts of the country thereby bearing impactful outcomes on the farming livelihoods, climate change mitigation and the country's agricultural transformation.

In addition to playing a huge role on economic, social and environment,

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High time to ensure food self-sufficiency via structural change

BY MESERET BEHAILU

ADDIS ABABA – Ethiopia needs to come up with structural changes and stakeholders' integration to overcome constraints in agriculture sector and ensure food security in a sustainable manner, Scholars recommended.

On Thursday, the Ethiopian Academy of Sciences (EAS) had organized a dialogue themed: "Why Persisting Food insecurity in Ethiopia".

On the occasion, Addis Ababa University Development Study College Prof. Belay Simane said that bringing about policy-based structural changes, improving

See High time ... Page 3

Ireland reaffirms commitment to supporting Ethiopia's peace-building initiatives

ADDIS ABABA (ENA) - Ireland's Deputy Prime Minister, Foreign Affairs Minister, and Defense Minister, Michael Martin reaffirmed Ireland's commitment to supporting Ethiopia's peace-building initiatives and dialogue processes.

The Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission (ENDC) Chief Commissioner Prof. Mesfin Araya held discussion yesterday with Michael Martin, along with his team.

The discussion focused on the ongoing National Dialogue process in Ethiopia and the potential lessons Ethiopia could learn from Ireland.

The Chief Commissioner has briefed Martin on the current progress of the

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News



Wondayehu Wube

MoH implementing initiative to improve public health

- Plans to outreach all 1,000 woredas in 2026

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

ADDIS ABABA – Designed to improve health among the rural community, the Clean Ethiopia initiative pilot project is being implemented in some selected 50 woredas across the country, Ministry of Health (MoH) said.

MoH WASH and Environmental Health Coordinator, Wondayehu Wube told *The Ethiopian Herald* that the project is poised to make sure that homes, streets, public and private organizations free from wastes, and looks green and attractive.

According to him, the selected woredas will be clean so that serve as models for others to implement the practice and share the experience.

He said the Ministry is implementing the Clean Ethiopia initiative in 50 woredas as pilot project more focusing rural areas and selecting one village in Addis Ababa to create conducive living environment for all citizens.

Wondayehu, who is also a Public Health Officer, stated that the selected woredas are mobilizing the people act upon the initiative.

Once completing the pilot project, the Ministry has planned to scale up the initiative to all 1,000 woredas of the nation by 2026, the Coordinator said.

He expected that that the initiative would make the country clean and healthy to its citizens.

“The public needs to make clean, green and beautiful it’s surrounding, home and organization,” he stressed.

The Officer also said that MoH has taken initiatives to build 100 toilets in Addis Ababa city by collaborating with partners to make roads clean and attractive in order to accelerate the Clean Ethiopia initiative.

The initiative will be implemented with funds from partners, government and the community, according to Wondayehu.

Ethiopia prioritizes fruit cultivation, indigenous plants in GLI

ADDIS ABABA (ENA) - Ethiopia’s Green Legacy Initiative (GLI) is shifting its focus this year to prioritize fruit cultivation and the planting of indigenous trees, Deputy Prime Minister Temesgen Tiruneh remarked today.

The goal is to maximize the direct benefits of citizens from the national Green Legacy Initiative launched five years ago.

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) yesterday joined Deputy Prime Minister Temesgen and the staff of the Prime Minister Office in planting indigenous saplings at the Chaka Project, a key component of the initiative aimed at replacing eucalyptus forests with native plant species.

On the occasion, the Deputy Prime Minister expressed satisfaction with the significant increase in Ethiopia’s forest cover since the program’s inception.

He revealed that the government plans to plant 7.5 billion saplings this year and is already well underway.

“This year, we are emphasizing fruit trees and indigenous plants to ensure that our citizens directly benefit from the Green Legacy Initiative,” the deputy prime



Temesgen Tiruneh

minister said.

Beyond environmental protection, this program will boost agricultural productivity, enhance tourism, and improve soil and water conservation, he added.

Temesgen highlighted that the initiative will create favorable conditions for the

successful implementation of the country’s agricultural development initiatives including wheat cultivation.

By replacing water-intensive eucalyptus trees with indigenous species, the government aims to optimize water resources and combat the effects of climate change, he stated.

Centers focus on improving coffee yield

BY FIKADU BELAY

ADDIS ABABA - The Agricultural Research Centers said that they have been emphasizing on improving coffee yielding and lucrative coffee business via entertaining disease-resistant coffee varieties.

Girma Tilahun (PhD), Deputy President at Mizan Tepi University Research and Community Services, told *The Ethiopian Herald* that their primary focus is on safeguarding the diverse coffee species found in the region. “We are committed to conducting extensive research to not only increase the value of coffee production but also ensure that our farmers can earn better incomes,” he stated.

In recent years, the coffee sector has faced significant challenges due to crop diseases and climate change. To address these issues, the research centers are collaborating with various stakeholders to find sustainable solutions, he said.

“We are closely working with stakeholders and utilizing research-based approaches to mitigate its impact and overcome challenges towards coffee production.”

For his part, Jimma Agricultural Research Center Director, Girma Hailemikeal (PhD), highlighted the remarkable progress has been made in developing high-performing coffee



varieties. The center has researched and distributed 49 improved coffee seeds, 40 of which have been carefully selected, and the remaining nine are hybrids.

These improved coffee seeds are not only highly productive, but also disease-resistant. The old coffee seeds can yield up to 17 quintals per hectare, while the hybrid improved coffee seeds can reach up to 19 quintals per hectare, he noted, adding that the demand for these improved seeds is steadily growing.

Moreover, the center has been implemented innovative approaches to ensure the widespread adoption of these improved coffee seeds. “We have set up workshops in the districts where

the selected coffee varieties are being planted in the farmers’ fields, and we provide close supervision to ensure proper care and management,” Girma explained.

Mizan Tepi University Research and Community Service is also working on diversifying the agricultural landscape by exploring the potential of other cash crops and livestock. Apart from coffee, we are also conducting research on livestock production, including Maji sheep and Sheko cattle, the Deputy President revealed. Also the effort is underway not only coffee, but it also soybeans, sorghum, and various animal feed crops.

News

ATI ramping up ...

the CEO emphasized that the institute is widely working on avocado as a strategic commodity under the green legacy initiative and providing sheds, necessary inputs and creating jobs to the youth in the area.

He said: "Through this initiative in the East Shewa zone, the country is exporting avocado products to European markets."

He further remarked that the institute is also exerting utmost efforts to reverse dependency and ensure the multifaceted benefits of farmers by increasing productivity.

According to him, the plantation is being held with different forms of species selected for their source of food, fodder, and income generation for the nation. Besides, it reduces carbon emission and promotes carbon trade.

He said adding that GLI has national and international significances as it is laying foundations for the current and coming generation with regard to resilient ecosystem and economy.

Identifying economy-based seedlings,



crops and fruits such as avocado, mango and banana, ATI is currently expanding productivity in various parts of the country, he added.

Apart from preserving the ecosystems in the area, he emphasized that the initiative helps communities exercise plantation as a culture for sustainable land management practices apart from creating green jobs.

"Out of the total plan to plant over 1.3 million seedlings in this summer plantation program, about 500,000 avocado saplings are so far planted."

The institute is also providing trainings, inputs to the youth who are nurturing various saplings. The area is known for wheat, soya bean and avocado products among many others, it was learnt.

Ireland reaffirms...

dialogue.

During the discussions, Martin shared Ireland's experiences in the peace-building process, highlighting the crucial role of political willingness and the importance of embracing diversity.

He also emphasized the significant contribution of women in Ireland's peace-building efforts.

Finally, Martin reaffirmed Ireland's commitment to supporting Ethiopia's peace-building initiatives and dialogue processes, according to information obtained from the Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission.

A delegation led by Ireland's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Micheál Martin, is in Addis Ababa for an official visit to Ethiopia.

The delegation held bilateral discussions with Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and President Sahle-Work Zewde on Thursday.

Why all eyes...

utilization administration, the Nile Basin Commission, colonial-era agreements will no longer be relevant. The AU will also address Nile River issues based on the framework ratified by basin countries," said Engineer Gedion Asfaw, a hydro-politics scholar.

Having such an administrative institution will allow countries to collaborate and resolve their differences internally, he added.

According to Gedion, the CFA is the most significant agreement that Nile riparian countries have signed in the history of their water cooperation. Despite this, many other directives are expected to be ratified following the establishment of the commission. The monitoring and evaluation of projects on the Nile River will also fall under the mandate of the new commission.

"Data exchange and expertise services, for example, could be easily provided to riparian countries," he noted.

The cooperation among countries will be supported and optimized. A group of researchers and experts representing each country is likely to be formed under the framework. All these structures, forming in fulfillment of the joint commission, would help to harmonize Nile water management, he explained.

He further noted that the commission will create new phases of cooperation on environmental protection works, as the Nile gorge faces an environmental crisis.

The CFA has already been ratified by six countries, with South Sudan's approval marking a significant step in transforming the initiative into a commission. The largest Nile River swamp is located in South Sudan, and the cooperation on the Nile will benefit South Sudan as well, Gedion emphasized.

He also criticized Egypt for "trying to reset the agenda and open new negotiations with

new agenda points," which has received no response from other riparian countries. It is believed that Egypt will eventually join the CFA for the sake of its own interests.

"The negotiation, which took 13 years, is not designed to benefit any single country exclusively. The CFA has been endorsed to benefit all countries of the Nile basin. It will allow Ethiopia and the other riparian countries to utilize the water equitably," he stressed.

International Politics Analyst Musa Sheku also added that the colonial-era agreement proponents, Sudan and Egypt, have no acceptance from other riparian countries, including from Ethiopia. After a long period since the colonial-era agreement, the CFA has embarked on an all-inclusive arrangement.

Opposing the CFA, Egypt and Sudan have not signed the agreement. The ratification of the CFA by six countries' parliaments has debunked the monopolization of Nile water advocated by these two countries. They should abandon the colonial agreement and join the CFA to benefit from new cooperation opportunities among riparian countries, he suggested.

Former member of the Abbay Dam negotiating team and water researcher and lecturer at Addis Ababa University, Professor Yacob Arsano, also noted that the CFA ratification benefits not only Ethiopia, but other riparian countries as well.

"Riparian countries need to work together to utilize the Nile water equitably. Countries contributing water to the Nile River accepted Ethiopia's proposal; they agreed and established the initiative 14 years ago. I think we all need to recognize the signing of the CFA by six countries as a significant milestone to work cooperatively with riparian countries," he added.



High time to ensure...

agricultural infrastructure, conducting researches and development activities meticulously, preserving natural resources, and producing agricultural input domestically needed to realize food security in Ethiopia.

As to him, the Ethiopian food system and the agriculture sector is facing various challenges, which are hindering the country from achieving food self-sufficiency.

Of course, a lot of activities have been done to improve the agriculture sector though it is not bringing adequate outcome. For instance, he mentioned that the number of average crop production increased from 10 quintals in 1990 to 20 quintals in 2011.

Similarly, this productivity has been increased to 23 quintals in 2022 though the food insecurity is still persisting in the nation, according to him.

Currently, the Ethiopian food insecurity reached 58.1% in the last two years, which is serious compared with sub-Saharan Africa in particular and African continent in general. Stunting is also reached to 34.4 % in the nation. Therefore, a lot of works should be carried out to address the challenge at large, he stressed.

Agricultural Economist and Ethiopian Studies Head at Wageningen University,

Dawit Alemu (PhD) on his part said that involving the private sector in the national development mainly in identifying resources and establishing proper food system, conforming the ecology to the people culture, policy, and indigenous knowledge would help to address food insecurity.

"Security, global market, import based approach, lack of quality products, rain fed agriculture and others are serious problems to realize food security in Ethiopia," Dawit added.

A representative from Civil Societies, Sale Getahun said: "Implementing value chain, giving due emphasis to quality production, extending two-way extension workers communication, establishing land use policy, and modernizing the sector significantly vital to bring fruitful outcomes in addressing food related factors."

Sale added that among others, soil degradation, climate change, and social instability are serious factors that are hindering the effort to ensure food security.

Moreover, participants agreed that governmental and non-governmental organizations, and research and higher education institutions should work together to alleviate the food shortage.

Opinion

My message to the new world

BY MASOUD PEZESHKIAN

(Iranian President-elect)

TEHRAN – On May 19, 2024, the untimely passing of President Ebrahim Raisi— a deeply respected and dedicated public servant— in a tragic helicopter crash precipitated early elections in Iran, marking a pivotal moment in our nation’s history.

Amidst war and turbulence in our region, Iran’s political system demonstrated remarkable stability by conducting elections in a competitive, peaceful, and orderly manner, dispelling insinuations made by some “Iran experts” in certain governments. This stability, and the dignified manner in which the elections were conducted, underscore the discernment of our Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Khamenei, and the dedication of our people to democratic transition of power even in the face of adversity.

I ran for office on a platform of reform, fostering national unity, and constructive engagement with the world, ultimately earning the trust of my compatriots at the ballot box, including those young women and men dissatisfied with the overall state of affairs. I deeply value their trust and I’m fully committed to cultivating consensus, both domestically and internationally, to uphold the promises I made during my campaign.

I wish to emphasize that my administration will be guided by the commitment to preserving Iran’s national dignity and international stature under all circumstances. Iran’s foreign policy is founded on the principles of “dignity, wisdom, and prudence”, with the formulation and execution of this state-policy being the responsibility of the president and the government. I intend to leverage all authority granted to my office to pursue this overarching objective.

With this in mind, my administration will pursue an opportunity-driven policy by creating balance in relations with all countries, consistent with our national interests, economic development, and requirements of regional and global peace and security. Accordingly, we will welcome sincere efforts to alleviate tensions and will reciprocate good-faith with good-faith.

Under my administration, we will prioritize strengthening relations with our neighbors. We will champion the establishment of a “strong region” rather than one where a single country pursues hegemony and dominance over the others. I firmly believe that neighboring and brotherly nations should not waste their valuable resources on erosive competitions, arms races, or the unwarranted containment of each other. Instead, we will aim to create an environment where our resources can be devoted to the progress and development

of the region for the benefit of all.

We look forward to cooperating with Turkiye, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Iraq, Bahrain, Qatar, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, and regional organizations to deepen our economic ties, bolster trade relations, promote joint-venture investment, tackle common challenges, and move towards establishing a regional framework for dialogue, confidence building and development. Our region has been plagued for too long by war, sectarian conflicts, terrorism and extremism, drug trafficking, water scarcity, refugee crises, environmental degradation, and foreign interference. It is time to tackle these common challenges for the benefit of future generations. Cooperation for regional development and prosperity will be the guiding principle of our foreign policy.

As nations endowed with abundant resources and shared traditions rooted in peaceful Islamic teachings, we must unite and rely on the power of logic rather than the logic of power. By leveraging our normative influence, we can play a crucial role in the emerging post-polar global order by promoting peace, creating a calm environment conducive to sustainable development, fostering dialogue, and dispelling Islamophobia. Iran is prepared to play its fair share in this regard.

As a first measure, my administration will urge our neighboring Arab countries to collaborate and utilize all political and diplomatic leverages to prioritize achieving a permanent ceasefire in Gaza aiming to stop the massacre and prevent the broadening of the conflict. We must then diligently work to end the prolonged occupation that has devastated the lives of four generations of Palestinians. In this context, I want to emphasize that all states have a binding duty under the 1948 Genocide Convention to take measures to prevent genocide; not to reward it through normalization of relations with the perpetrators.

Today, it seems that many young people in Western countries have recognized the validity of our decades-long stance on the Israeli regime. I would like to take this opportunity to tell this brave generation that we regard the allegations of antisemitism against Iran for its principled stance on the Palestinian issue as not only patently false but also as an insult to our culture, beliefs, and core values. Rest assured that these accusations are as absurd as the unjust claims of antisemitism directed at you while you protest on university campuses to defend the Palestinians’ right to life.

China and Russia have consistently stood by us during challenging times. We deeply value this friendship. Our 25-year roadmap with China represents a significant milestone towards establishing a mutually beneficial “comprehensive strategic partnership,” and we look forward to collaborating more extensively

with Beijing as we advance towards a new global order. In 2023, China played a pivotal role in facilitating the normalization of our relations with Saudi Arabia, showcasing its constructive vision and forward-thinking approach to international affairs.

Russia is a valued strategic ally and neighbor to Iran and my administration will remain committed to expanding and enhancing our cooperation. We strive for peace for the people of Russia and Ukraine, and my government will stand prepared to actively support initiatives aimed at achieving this objective. I will continue to prioritize bilateral and multilateral cooperation with Russia, particularly within frameworks such as BRICS, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and Eurasia Economic Union.

Recognizing that the global landscape has evolved beyond traditional dynamics, my administration is committed to fostering mutually beneficial relations with emerging international players in the Global South, especially with African nations. We will strive to enhance our collaborative efforts and strengthen our partnerships for the mutual benefit of all involved.

Iran’s relations with Latin America are well-established and will be closely maintained and deepened to foster development, dialogue and cooperation in all fields. There is significantly more potential for cooperation between Iran and the countries of Latin America than what is currently being realized, and we look forward to further strengthening our ties.

Iran’s relations with Europe have known its ups and downs. After the United States’ withdrawal from the JCPOA (Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action) in May 2018, European countries made eleven commitments to Iran to try to salvage the agreement and mitigate the impact of the United States’ unlawful and unilateral sanctions on our economy. These commitments involved ensuring effective banking transactions, effective protection of companies from U.S. sanctions, and the promotion of investments in Iran. European countries have reneged on all these commitments, yet unreasonably expect Iran to unilaterally fulfill all its obligations under the JCPOA.

Despite these missteps, I look forward to engaging in constructive dialogue with European countries to set our relations on the right path, based on principles of mutual respect and equal footing. European countries should realize that Iranians are a proud people whose rights and dignity can no longer be overlooked. There are numerous areas of cooperation that Iran and Europe can explore once European powers come to terms with this reality and set aside self-arrogated moral supremacy coupled with manufactured crises that have plagued our relations for so long. Opportunities for collaboration

include economic and technological cooperation, energy security, transit routes, environment, as well as combating terrorism and drug trafficking, refugee crises, and other fields, all of which could be pursued to the benefit of our nations.

The United States also needs to recognize the reality and understand, once and for all, that Iran does not—and will not—respond to pressure. We entered the JCPOA in 2015 in good faith and fully met our obligations. But the United States unlawfully withdrew from the agreement motivated by purely domestic quarrels and vengeance, inflicting hundreds of billions of dollars in damage to our economy, and causing untold suffering, death and destruction on the Iranian people— particularly during the Covid pandemic— through the imposition of extraterritorial unilateral sanctions. The U.S. deliberately chose to escalate hostilities by waging not only an economic war against Iran but also engaging in state terrorism by assassinating General Qassem Soleimani, a global anti-terrorism hero known for his success in saving the people of our region from the scourge of ISIS and other ferocious terrorist groups. Today, the world is witnessing the harmful consequences of that choice.

The U.S. and its Western allies, not only missed a historic opportunity to reduce and manage tensions in the region and the world, but also seriously undermined the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) by showing that the costs of adhering to the tenets of the non-proliferation regime could outweigh the benefits it may offer. Indeed, the U.S. and its Western allies have abused the non-proliferation regime to fabricate a crisis regarding Iran’s peaceful nuclear program - openly contradicting their own intelligence assessment - and use it to maintain sustained pressure on our people.

I wish to emphasize that Iran’s defense doctrine does not include nuclear weapons and urge the United States to learn from past miscalculations and adjust its policy accordingly. Decision-makers in Washington need to recognize that a policy that consists of pitting regional countries against each other has not succeeded and will not succeed in the future. They need to come to terms with this reality and avoid exacerbating current tensions.

The Iranian people have entrusted me with a strong mandate to vigorously pursue constructive engagement on the international stage while insisting on our rights, our dignity and our deserved role in the region and the world. I extend an open invitation to those willing to join us in this historic endeavor.

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

Editorial

Thriving diplomatic triumph

Ethiopia's diplomatic undertakings have gathered new momentum over the last months of the Ethiopian year in effect, 2016. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs highlighted some of the diplomatic feats of the year at a biweekly press conference held on Thursday.

"All the way from cultivating good neighborliness towards shared interests to enhancing participation in multilateral fora such as the African Union and UN Economic Commission for Africa, Ethiopia has registered significant strides," MoFA Spokesperson Nebiyu Tedla said.

Ethiopia has thrown its full weight behind the righteous cause of maintaining regional, continental, and international peace and security as well as achieving perennial prosperity.

Each and every grand domestic economic, social and political activity of the country has deliberately been entwined with global, continental and regional endeavors.

From ensuring normalcy at home through the proper implementation of the Pretoria peace accord inked back in 2022, clean energy development, and Green Legacy Initiative (GLI) to infrastructural projects, a great deal of emphasis has been attached with promoting a shared prosperity. A case in point in this regard can be the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Somaliland whose impact goes even beyond the region. As the saying goes: "a rising tide lifts all boats," the would-be Ethiopia's coastal presence fosters regional integration among the Horn countries, and the economic dividend goes to all. The scheme indisputably boosts maritime security.

As a host to the AU headquarters, Addis Ababa successfully received African heads of state and government as well as the delegations that they led at the 37th AU Summit in February—a summit that zoomed in on: "Educate an African fit for the 21st Century: Building Resilient Education Systems for Increased Access to Inclusive, Lifelong, Quality and Relevant Learning in Africa." Also, at the UN, Ethiopia has been fulfilling its due commitments. Ethiopia participated in UNGA, UN Committee meetings, UN Human Rights Commission's meetings, WHO conference and many other sessions of global significance.

Ethiopia's foreign policy is anchored on improving the livelihood of its millions of citizens. The country firmly believes that sound domestic policies that are formulated to bring all-round prosperity at home are the bases of prudent diplomatic engagements. Today, Ethiopia is working diligently in all respects to deal with challenges that it has encountered along many fronts. The home-grown economic reform agenda that has entered its second phase is bringing about macro-economic stability, boosting the private sector's role in economic undertakings and unlocking the country's full growth potential. The priority sectors, agriculture, mining, manufacturing, tourism, ICT and digital economy are creating jobs for millions of people in the country in addition to improving nutrition and lessening foreign dependency.

The feats in various areas enhance Ethiopia's ties with its neighbors and beyond. Ethiopia's clean energy production primarily meets the country's demands. Then, it lights up homes in the neighboring countries. Its agricultural produce as well feeds millions of mouths at the domestic level and the surplus goes where there is demand. Ethiopia that is in peace with at itself promotes peace with its neighbors, and the ripple effect is so large.

The next Ethiopian year, 2017, surely deepens Ethiopia's ties with its neighbors, the continent and the world. The country's diplomatic activities will be improved both in depth and scope. Ethiopia's diplomacy, which is pursued both by seasoned and young diplomats, and complemented with state-of-the-art technology, would further thrive and benefit both the country and wider international community in the year ahead.



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Opinion

Rights to Water and Sanitation – Part II

BY TESFAYE ABATE ABEBE

Adequacy, Availability, Quality, Accessibility, and Sustainability are the normative contents of the right to water and sanitation.

Adequacy- water must be adequate for human life, dignity and health so as to ensure the high living standard of physical and mental standard enshrined under Arts 11 and 12 ICESCR. Adequacy, here does not only mean to quantity and technology, but it should be more than that and be considered as social and cultural good rather than economic good.

Quality- water must be safe that is free from microorganisms, radiological substances and chemical substances. Water should also have acceptable odor, taste, and color. It must be safe technically to use all times. Sanitation facilities and tools must be safe and culturally acceptable. For instance, facilities in work and school should be separate for women and men and/or girls and boys, respectively. The hygiene practices need to be culturally acceptable, as well.

Accessibility is the third component of the right to water and sanitation that has several dimensions including physical accessibility, economic accessibility, non-discrimination, and information. Water and sanitation in house, workplace, field, and water bodies must be safe, sufficient, and regular. Particularly, women and girls be physically secured and safe when they access water- this is related to physical accessibility. Everyone should have access to personal, domestic and production sanitation facilities and services. In addition, sanitation facilities and services such as construction, emptying and maintenance of facilities, treatment and disposal must be in affordable prices to all without affecting the capacity to afford other basic goods and services like the food, housing, health and education. Water resources and facilities must be managed in accordance with the non-discriminatory principle, particularly for marginalized and disadvantaged groups, and in respecting customary and community based water management system. Also, the information access about water and sanitation and water management must be ensured.

Sustainability- the right to water and sanitation must be sustainable which means that it should be guaranteed for the existing generation and the coming generation, too.

States at the international level have the general obligation to progressively realize the right to water and non-discrimination. Further, they have the specific obligations to respect, fulfill and respect the right. The right to water, as any other human right, imposes the three obligations on the government, vis, the duty to 'respect' that requires the government not to interfere directly; the obligation to 'protect' meaning protect the right from

the interference of the third party, and the obligation to 'fulfill' that requires the government to facilitate, promote, and provide what is required to implement the right. Further, it requires the due diligence of State to implement.

Some international legal instruments explicitly recognize the right to water such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), Convention on the Rights of Children (CRC), and several UN resolutions of the General assembly recognize the right to water and sanitation as human rights.

CEDAW under Art 14(2) (h) recognize the right to water and sanitation for women, while CRC considers clean drinking water as essential for children under Art 24(2) (c). Further, the 2010 Resolution A/64/292, and the Resolution 15/9 recognize the right to water and sanitation. In addition, SDG 6 considers 'access to water and sanitation for all'.

Ethiopia has ratified all the above considered international instruments and this makes them part of the law of the nation, and therefore, Ethiopia is required to implement this internationally imposed human rights obligation. Further, Ethiopia has enacted laws and policies, though not clearly recognize the right to water and sanitation but that would promote and implement the right to water and sanitation. To begin with, the FDRE Constitution does not clearly recognize this right under the Human Rights section, except stating that the State will provide social services to citizens (Art. 41(4)). As per Art. 90 (1) of the Constitution, the Ethiopian Government is obligated to allocate a resource as the country's resource permits to provide all Ethiopians access to clean water.

The Water management Proclamation No. 197/2000 Art 3 aspires for the use of water resources for the highest economic and social benefit of Ethiopian peoples. It gives priority to domestic use over any other uses (art 7) which is aligns with the international standard. The Ethiopian law regulated the quality of water and no one is allowed to discharge polluted water (Regulations No. 115/2005, Art.5) unless treated properly and having given permit for discharging it into water body (Regulations No. 115/2005, Arts.11-13).

Generally, the right to water and sanitation, though not clearly provided under the domestic laws of Ethiopia, are recognized under the international instruments that are applicable to Ethiopia. Thus, since the time is Kiremt where Ethiopia can get rainwater, it is important to properly collect and use it to uplift the standard of living of the Ethiopian People and conserving the ecosystem.

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

Art & Culture

'Drinking for the cold': A seasonal ritual?

BY MULUGETA GUDETA

There was a recent article in this column dealing with the pitfalls of addiction to alcoholic drinks that were visible in our society and more particularly among the educated folks and the literati whose indulgence in drinks was the subject of many books, films, and autobiographies. This disorder of consuming too much drink to "fuel their creativity". This was also the chosen lifestyle by our writers who often chose to sink their frustrations in bottles or glasses of hard drinks.

The following piece deals not with the true or real-life writer but with a fictional character created by a long-dead writer who delved into the world of illusion and fantasy by Tebeje, the leading character in the first short story in the Amharic language.

The first short story in Amharic is entitled "The Drunkard of Gulele", and deals with the story of a drunkard who lived in the Gulele district in Addis Ababa in the period before the Italian occupation of Ethiopia. The story has nothing to do with history unless it is to demarcate the historical background that served as the setting for this fictional work. This columnist has translated this short story into English although it remains unpublished to this day. Temesgen Gebre, the author of the short story starts his narration by giving us the background information we need to see what kind of person the main character is.

From Geferssa to Yegezu Sefer, whenever people inquired about the well-known hen dealer who lived in Gulele, they told them his name was Tebeje the Drunkard or Tebeje the Hen Dealer.

The story of his life is full of adventures. He is an old man with a beard. He never washed or cut his hair. He does not talk in the morning. After drinking a great deal in the evening, he throws insults left and right or sings war songs. His voice was stronger than a well-fed dog. In the evening, he greets everybody he meets, whether he is an acquaintance or not. He laughs with anybody he meets in the evening. Whether he realizes it or not, the nature of his greetings entirely depends on his preferences and moods.

Temesgen's description gives us a glimpse of the main character's physical and psychological condition although the story deals mainly with the struggle against his alcoholic addiction and his decision at one point to quit drinking for once and all. The story is told in a humorous way tracing Tebeje's fall and rise along the course of his recovery and relapse and ends with him on the doctor's table as a victim of a car accident.

The story should not however be regarded in isolation to the social context and the values prevalent in society during that period. Ethiopian society has always been tolerant of the habit or abuse of drinking. Drinking is considered macho and the manifestation of bravado and male superiority. Drinking



in society was and is a show of power, the power of the husband over his spouse, then the power of the rich over the poor, and the power of the downtrodden over their condition because alcohol is considered a potent remedy against people's lack and hopelessness simply because they can sleep in peace after imbibing a good deal of that poisonous liquid, called alcohol.

Tebeje, "the hen dealer" and the consummate drinker in the above story, enjoys drinking because it helps him keep in the same cycle of promising not to drink and drinking on the morrow of the evening's drinking spree which ultimately leads him to his demise. Tebeje indulged in alcohol because he also loved to stay in that same cycle of drunken state in the evening and sobriety the next morning.

Apart from Tebeje, many people imagine or invent anything not to abandon their bad habit of overusing alcohol as a palliative, which is not in reality. Alcohol has never cured any trouble in our lives. It may be a temporary painkiller but not a lasting remedy. Whether we drink to protect ourselves from bad weather-if at all it gives us true protection to make the most out of a holiday, the result is the same. We drink to numb our senses, forget our sorrows, or indulge in illusory happiness whether in good and bad times, in sunshine or cold and rainfall.

Speaking of rainfall, we are now in the midst of our rainy season when the showers are more frequent, and the cold is almost breaking our bones. During these moments of natural bliss, many people choose to hurt themselves by indulging in drinking just to ward off the cold and feel and enjoy the deceptive warmth that embraces us after downing a couple of drinks at some wayside pub or at public houses where traditional drinks are usually served at a cheaper price.

Tebeje in our story above was the kind of drinker who does not choose his tavern or choose his drink. He is drinking anything that would keep him in his self-made prison

of self-destruction, breaking his vows and making new vows that he broke the next day. And he enjoyed this kind of Sisyphian absurdity. In the Myth of Sisyphus, the protagonist is rolling up a boulder only to find it at his feet doing the same movement again and again until the end of existence.

Tebeje too may be called a drinker or a drunkard with a Sisyphian appetite for doing the same movement every day of his life until he could do it anymore following the car accident he suffered as a result of his bad habit. Tebeje did not drink to defend himself against the cold of winter. He was drinking because he loved it for one reason or another. And without knowing it he has become the victim of his own making, an addict.

Let us look at the following portion of the story to grasp the love the character felt toward the bottle. The author tells us that, "When he opened the bottle, he remembered that he needed a glass. He took the bottle to his mouth and drank three long gulps. He then thought about getting a glass. He was looking at the remaining drink in the moonlight. He just wanted to know how much was remaining. "I have drunk almost half of it!" He said and burst into laughter. "There is no need to get a glass to finish what is left." He added, shaking the drink in the bottle." Instead of the Sisyphian balder, Tebeje is rolling the bottled up and down, getting the pleasure he so craved as well as his suicide he found it in the street following the car accident.

There is something I overlooked here. Many people drink not only for pleasure but also as a remedy against insomnia and anxiety in their lives. Tebeje too embraces drinking as a palliative against sleeplessness. The author of the story tells us, "He slept well because he was very tired. He did not listen to the rain, thunder, or the flood. He thought he heard some other voice. He imagined he had heard a song or an ululation. He thought it was only the effect of the hangover from his previous night's drinking spree. "This is

rather madness and not drunkenness!" He said to himself and went back to sleep."

Here, Tebeje passes from the "absurdity" of drinking for the sake of drinking, to one of "purposeful drinking" if there is anything like that. He is also drinking to fight off insomnia and in this, his addiction finds some justification. Although the source of Tebeje's insomnia is unknown, we are indirectly told that he drinks to sleep well although he wakes up in the morning with terrible headaches and a growing need to drink more to deal with his hangovers. Tebeje also experienced some kind of hallucination during the night after he went to bed in a drunken state. The author tells us that, "He thought he heard some other voice. He imagined he had heard a song or an ululation. He thought it was only the effect of the hangover from his previous night's drinking spree."

By the way, the reasons, feelings, and emotions that Tebeje felt back then are ever present in real-life people in our modern times. There are still people who drink for one reason or another, knowing deep down that their actions are wrong and painful. Whether the reasons may be constructive or self-destructive, people continue to drink without minding the consequences that they feel after their addiction takes them too far in life and reaches a point of no return.

Tebeje's life may provide us with relevant lessons as to the devastating effect of drinking on our lives. This may be more instructive to the members of the younger generation who are attracted by the false glitter of the bottle or the glass. Even a medical doctor would not tell you to stop drinking because that would interfere with your personal choices. Yet, you should not wait until the doctor tells you to stop. You can stop it yourself. You have the power and the will to come out of the evil of alcoholic addiction. Do it today and a year from now, you will remember how Tebeje, the fictional character messed with his own life by choosing the way of suicide.

Law & Politics

Ethiopia's commitment to peace, Somalia's prevarications

BY SOLOMON WASSIHUN

One of President Hassan Sheikh's harshest critics is his Somaliland counterpart Muse Bihi, who has accused him of dishonesty - no surprise. However, the main issue raised by many of the Somali president's critics is his obsession with foreign travel. They even called him the "flying president". And no matter where he flew, Hassan Sheikh seems to have made a habit of making inflammatory speeches against neighboring Ethiopia. Since the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the governments of Ethiopia and the self-declared Republic of Somaliland last New Year's Day, he has done so constantly.

However, his recent speech in the Somali parliament, in which he denounced Ethiopia, was unexpected, especially considering the positive and hopeful news we heard from Türkiye just a few days earlier. The Joint Ankara Statement made by Ethiopia and Somalia, both represented by a delegation led by their respective foreign ministers, said the two countries had agreed to continue their negotiation at the beginning of the coming September in Türkiye. It was news welcomed by the people of both countries, as it heralded the two governments were taking the right direction to resolve their arguments and diffuse the tension building up the Horn.

Unfortunately, Hassan Sheikh's speech splashed cold water on our hearts that had been warmed by the glimmer of hope emanating from the talks held in Türkiye. The Somali president was expected to make a cautious statement on the preliminary peace talks and not to disturb the fragile atmosphere created by the Turkish peace mediators that could develop into a basis for direct peace negotiations between Ethiopia and Somalia in the coming September.

We had expected the Somali government to issue a statement similar to that of its Ethiopian counterpart. The Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs expressed its hope and confidence in the peace efforts in Türkiye and assured that it would make unconditional efforts to work with its Somali partner to secure peace in the region.

"The Ministers, through Türkiye's facilitation, were able to separately have a candid, cordial, and forward-looking exchange concerning their differences and explored perspectives towards addressing them within a mutually acceptable framework. The Ministers of Somalia and Ethiopia reiterated their commitment to the peaceful resolution of differences," says the Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Starting with the positive action taken by the Somali government, it quitted its intransigence not to negotiate without pre-conditions and was willing to sit for preliminary talks in Türkiye. That is a considerable improvement made by the Somali government that deserves praise. However, the government has continued to make negative PR campaigns against

Ethiopia that would negatively affect the prospect of the negotiation procession.

The Somali government seems to be sticking with this negative PR campaign even though it knows such actions endanger the peace initiative, which is the only wise way out of the current political tension building up in the Horn, a situation that would if left unaddressed, have detrimental consequences to both the Ethiopian and Somali peoples. Instead of engaging with the Ethiopian government for peaceful talks to reach a common understanding and defuse the political tension, the Somali government is trying to ferment the misunderstanding into a regional political crisis that invites the involvement of influential world powers already actively pursuing their national interests in the region. As seen in the past, the interference of such powers would only complicate and exacerbate tensions.

There are two possible explanations for why the Somali government is acting irresponsibly in such a manner. It is using the developing diplomatic row with the Ethiopian government as a tool of nationalism to galvanize the Somali people under its leadership. At the same time by dragging the stable Ethiopian government into diplomatic hot water, Hassan Sheikh is desperately trying to aggrandize his self-image as a president of a strong and stable government worthy of the status of a fully-fledged, assertive and powerful government.

However, the truth on the ground is the other way around. A Research paper published only two months ago by an American military intelligence institute asks: "An important question for the future of Somalia is if the African Union withdraws the remainder of its forces from the country by December 31, 2024, would the Somali National Army (SNA) or Al-Shabaab be stronger militarily?". Let alone the regional towns, Mogadishu is still an easy target for Al-Shabaab. Only a few days ago, a car bomb right in the capital city claimed several lives and injured many others.

In a nutshell, as things stand now the survival of Hassan Sheikh's government is directly linked to the continued presence of foreign peacekeeping forces, like the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS), in one form or another. It is highly doubtful that the troops of the newly established Somali Security Forces would emulate the war-hardened soldiers of the ATMIS especially the Ethiopians in the continuing fight against Al-Shabaab.

Realizing that Hassan Sheikh has already requested the troop supplier, AU and the mission financiers, the UN and world powers, to preempt the possible creation of a security vacuum in that nation by installing a post-ATMIS mission. What is more, it is hard to imagine how well Al Shabaab, a terrorist group that proved itself to be a menace to the Horn's peace, would use the possible security vacuum that might be developed following the departure of

Ethiopia seeks to get sea access without harming anyone and its strategy is based on win-win principles, benefiting not only Ethiopia but the entire region by strengthening regional cooperation and sharing resources

ATMIS, by the timetable set in the Somali Transition Plan, STP.

The other possible reason for Hassan Sheikh's warmongering attitude is his involvement in a lucrative strategic alliance with Egypt, which has always been working to see to it that Ethiopia remains landlocked and thus disabled from realizing its economic potential. It is to be recalled that the first two countries Hassan Sheikh visited soon after he was elected president in 2022 were Egypt and Eritrea. Since then, he made several visits to those countries to meet the leaders and strategize their moves, which undoubtedly are plans that resulted to the detriment of the people of the Horn, causing instability and further chaos.

The Somali government therefore employs prevarication as a strategy to deceive the international community into believing it is genuinely committed to resolving the diplomatic dispute between the two countries peacefully. Shik Mahamoud stated in a recent speech that his government is willing to dialogue peacefully while accusing Ethiopia of being unresponsive to negotiations. This is an outright lie.

If the Somali government truly believes in and is interested in a peaceful resolution, then why did it expel the Ethiopian ambassador from Mogadishu, and recall its ambassador from Addis-Ababa? During Shiek Mohamud's trip to Addis Ababa last February for the AU's annual summit, why did he decline the opportunity to meet and talk with Ethiopian Premier Abiy Ahmed?

The Somali leadership should rather align its actions with a firm conviction that the

best strategy for shared prosperity for the people of Somalia and Ethiopia is peaceful coexistence by ironing out differences through honest direct talks without pre-conditions or third-party mediators. It should also recognize the fact that Ethiopia has never initiated policies that violate the sovereignty and territorial integrity of any of its neighbours, including Somalia.

There is one historical fact that would stand as a living testimony to Ethiopia's unwavering stance on respecting the territorial integrity of Somalia. Back in the late 1950s, when Somali provinces were bracing to declare independence from their colonizers, the clan leaders of the Somaliland Protectorate, now Somaliland, came to Ethiopia with a groundbreaking proposal to discuss with the Ethiopian Emperor Haileselassie and his advisors.

In short, they proposed to unite Somaliland with Ethiopia. The clan leaders, who remain the influential drivers of Somali politics to this day, justified their proposal by saying that they are more biologically, socially, and economically connected to Somali communities in Ethiopia than those in southern Somalia, which was an Italian colony.

That was an astounding proposal for Ethiopian authorities. But what was more surprising than the proposal of the Somaliland clan leaders, was the response of the Ethiopian authorities. They declined the request for unification. The exact reason for the rejection should be studied by historians and political scientists.

According to some Ethiopian officials who had insider knowledge about this historical event, the Ethiopian authorities felt that they would be seen as expansionist by the international community. Thus their motive for the extensive support they provide for the anti-colonial struggle across the continent might be called into question by the freedom fighters. More importantly, they were preoccupied with the multifaceted task of maintaining and consolidating the fledgling federation union between Eritrea and Ethiopia.

Ethiopia's commitment to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Somalia remains unchanged to this generation. In his recent speech at the parliament, the premier said: "No one should lose sight of the fact that Ethiopia has been defending Somalia's peace and stability with the blood and bone of its sons and daughters, many of whom paid the ultimate sacrifice in the fight against lawlessness and terrorism in that nation. As a closely intertwined neighbour, we always want to see peace and development prevail in Somalia. Ethiopia seeks to get sea access without harming anyone and its strategy is based on win-win principles, benefiting not only Ethiopia but the entire region by strengthening regional cooperation and sharing resources. Ethiopia's quest for sea access is justified. If there is any issue with this quest, it can be solved through dialogue."

I believe that the future of Ethiopia lies in horticulture

- Tewodros Zewdie

BY GIRMACHEW GASHAW

Today's guest, Tewodros Zewdie, is the Executive Director of the Ethiopian Horticulture Exporters and Producers Association (EHPEA). He is also the Program Manager for the Ethio-Dutch Program for Horticultural Development (EDPHD), a program that comprises four major components: Investment Promotion and Improving the Business Climate, Integrated Pest Management (IPM), Capacity Building, and Support for Emerging Entrepreneurs in the Ethiopian Horticulture sector.

With over 17 years of solid experience in agriculture, perishable logistics, policy advocacy, private sector development, journalism, communications, supply chain management, research, and development programs, Tewodros brings a wealth of knowledge to his current roles. Prior to joining EHPEA, he served as the General Manager of the Ethiopian Horticulture Cooperative (EHC), focusing on supply chain activities for the Ethiopian horticulture export industry, particularly in perishable air freight operations.

Tewodros has also held positions as the Media and Communications Manager at the Addis Ababa Chamber of Commerce and Sectoral Association, Marketing and Communications Specialist for the Ethiopian Private Sector Development Hub, Deputy Director of the Addis Ababa Millennium Secretariat, and Communications Affairs Core Process Owner at the Addis Ababa City Government Communication Affairs Bureau. Additionally, he served as the National Conflict Thematic Manager at ACORD, an international NGO, and has written numerous articles for local and international electronic and print media outlets.

He holds a Master's degree in International Relations and a Bachelor's degree in Political Science and International Relations from Addis Ababa University, as well as a Bachelor of Science degree in Logistics and Supply Chain Management from the German Foreign Trade and Logistics Academy.

In his interview with *The Ethiopia Herald*, Tewodros discussed various issues related to business opportunities in Ethiopia's horticulture sector and EHPEA's efforts to enhance relations between government institutions and horticulture producers. Enjoy the read!

What makes Ethiopia the best destination for investors in the horticultural industry?

Ethiopia stands out as a unique country for the production and export of horticultural crops, boasting both competitive and comparative advantages. When considering the cost of doing business, Ethiopia is among the most affordable countries.

One key advantage is the abundant sunshine year-round, essential for horticultural crops. With over 60 million people in the country having an agricultural background, there is a plentiful labor force available. Additionally, Ethiopia offers some of the lowest clean energy costs globally, particularly in terms of electricity. The country is also very rich both in surface and ground water that is why it is dubbed as 'The Water Tower of East Africa'.

The country's strategic market proximity to the Middle East and Europe is advantageous in comparison with other production areas, as is the presence of Ethiopian Airlines, serving over 130 destinations. Land availability is abundant, with the government offering generous investment incentives to those in the sub-sector. These factors make Ethiopia highly competitive and comparative for horticultural production and export.

Ethiopia's diverse agro-ecology, with more than 18 zones, allows growing of a wide variety of horticultural crops. This diversity puts Ethiopia on a highly position globally. It is also ideal for investors looking to embark up on the horticulture sector.

The railway connection to Djibouti provides additional logistical capacity for potential investors. Compared to neighboring

countries like Kenya, Ethiopia is a leading player in the horticultural export industry, ranking second in export volume and value in Africa.

Compared to neighboring countries like Kenya, what level are we at?

Currently, Ethiopia is the second largest exporter of cut flowers in Africa after Kenya. Ethiopia's horticulture industry has experienced exponential growth, despite being established for only 15 to 20 years. There is still much potential to be unlocked in the fruit and vegetable segment in Ethiopia, which is fantastic.

One of the advantages of the horticulture sector is its ability to create jobs for skilled and non-skilled fellow compatriots especially youth. Women are the prime beneficiaries of the employment opportunities. They account for more than 75% of the workforce of the industry.

How many people are currently finding employment?

According to data from the Ministry of Agriculture, nearly 200,000 individuals are benefiting from job opportunities in the horticulture sector, as it is labor-intensive. For example, the seed business can generate between 65 to 70 jobs per hectare, while the cutting industry can create 35 to 45 jobs per hectare.

This trend extends to fruit and vegetable companies, which also provide a significant number of job opportunities, particularly for women. In fact, over 75% of the employment opportunities in the sector are for women.

Moreover, the industry is not only creating jobs for unskilled workers, but also for



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Ethiopia's diverse agro-ecology, with more than 18 zones, allows growing of a wide variety of horticultural crops. This diversity puts Ethiopia on a highly position globally. It is also ideal for investors looking to embark up on the horticulture sector

skilled individuals. Graduates from TVET centers and universities can also take advantage of the job opportunities in the sector. Overall, it is clear that the majority of beneficiaries from the sector are women.

How do you monitor whether the industry applies all the legal and technical measures for the work place safety and health of workers?

Every company is expected to comply with standards regarding occupational safety and health (OSH). I believe there has been significant progress in meeting these standards for OSH. We do have an accredited TVET center that elevates the capacity of our members regarding OSH. Continuous training and audit is also undertaken by public and market label standards. Supply chain actors are also putting additional layer of parameters regarding OSH. All is implemented by the farms. But, it doesn't mean that everything is a bed of roses. There are still some grey areas which should be improved.

How much is the membership of your association? What do you do to address the problems faced by your members?

Currently, we have about 126 members engaged in the production and export of cut flowers, cuttings, fruit, vegetables, vegetable seeds, and herbs.

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As a business membership organization, our core function is to defend the interests of our members. We work to promote policies that create a favorable environment for horticulture investors in Ethiopia. Over the past two decades, the association managed to influence a number of policies, regulations, directives, circulars, and guidelines to improve conditions for investors and the country.

Our goal is not only to defend our members' interests but also to propose policies that benefit the country. Our association has played a crucial role in creating a more favorable environment for the horticulture sector in Ethiopia. Our members, including smallholder farmers, benefit from the policies, regulations, directives and guidelines that are now in place.

Some people are now complaining that the horticulture sector is using chemicals that damage the land. How do you view this issue?

The sector does use chemicals, which is a fact, but all chemicals used are regulated internationally, by standards, and by national regulatory bodies. Additionally, there is a shift towards using biological agents to reduce the application of traditional pesticide.

Chemicals and fertilizers are targeted at crops, not the soil, with efforts to use biodegradable options. The association provides strong training to ensure member compliance. There is a noticeable shift in the Rift Valley towards biological control agents and integrated pest management.

Standards regulate pesticide application, with farms expected to comply. While isolated incidents may occur, most companies are following social and environmental standards. Ethiopia has the potential to earn more foreign currency in the sector, with vast untapped potential in water resources and uncultivated land suitable for horticulture.

As the world population grows, so does the demand for fruit and vegetables. Ethiopia's ideal conditions make it a prime location for horticulture investment.

How many types of horticultural products are currently being exported from Ethiopia? Why are we unable to expand our export destinations?

Currently, Ethiopian horticultural products are being exported to various regions of the world including neighboring countries, the Middle East, Europe, the Northern Hemisphere, the Far East (such as South Korea and Japan), and even Australia. Despite these export destinations, there is still much untapped potential for economic benefits in the country.

As previously mentioned, the horticulture sector has the potential to generate billions, but this requires a strategic approach. Currently, we are in the validation program stage. It is crucial to establish proactively structured frameworks to support the horticulture industry and ensure seamless integration of all stakeholders and one stop shop support service provision, including



collaboration between academic and research institutions and the private sector.

Reviewing the input system in the country is essential, as we currently rely on importing inputs from other countries. Finding breakthroughs in this area is necessary. Access to finance is also a critical issue that needs to be addressed.

Establishing horticultural or horti-parks based on research and study can significantly benefit both the government and the private sector by reducing costs. Investing in skilled manpower for the industry is also essential.

Branding the Ethiopian horticulture industry and complying with international standards are key steps to overcome the challenges we face.

What are the challenges especially faced by horticulture growers? What is your association doing to address these challenges?

Capacity is a major issue. Our association has a TVET center that is working to enhance the capacity of our members so they can meet international standards. We are providing training to thousands of workers and other stakeholders in the horticulture industry to increase capacity.

In terms of input challenges, we are organizing B2B sessions with input suppliers and growers. Infrastructure challenges also exist in some locations. We are closely collaborating with government institutions to address infrastructure issues, such as access roads and electricity

connectivity.

Some locations experience frequent power outages, which must be addressed due to the perishable nature of horticultural crops. We are working with the government and service providers to improve agro logistics and maintain the cool chain.

We are also collaborating with international partners on various issues. Emerging challenges like False Codling Moth (FCM) which is a quarantine and priority pest of European Union needs to be addressed. We are working hard to manage it. The association has trained nearly 20,000 industry workers on identifying and managing false codling moth.

We are also building capacity in other areas, such as managing water treatment plants, solid waste disposal, and converting solid waste into compost and other products. These initiatives promote sustainability in the industry.

Quality is fundamental in order to compete other countries. How is the association doing in this regard?

As I mentioned earlier, we are building the capacity of our members on quality issues. We deliver trainings specifically tailored for quality compliance and work with other institutions. We need to partner with a number of institutions to have a better impact at the national level. We have also advocated the incorporation of quality in strategies, and the Ministry of Agriculture has taken steps in that direction.

Quality also requires laboratories and

infrastructure, and we are making progress in that area by working with international partners to build regulatory bodies, support the private sector, and assist growers.

Horticulture growers are not adding any value to their products; they are simply exporting raw materials. What is the challenge in doing so?

There are debates about exporting versus importing. In my opinion, there is no conflict if you are focused on exporting. Working in export can help build knowledge and experience, which is the trajectory of the industry in the Rift Valley.

There has been a growth in commercial farms supplying the local market, which could be seen as an extension of companies working on export commodities. I do not see any conflict between working for export and working for local produce. The government has invested billions in constructing Integrated Agro-Industrial Parks. Processors in the parks need also consistent supply of inputs as well.

I believe more companies should enter the scene to supply processors located in integrated agro-industrial products. We have not fully utilized the country's potential for export or local consumption. I think there is enough potential for both export and local consumption in Ethiopia. The country can benefit greatly from exporting while also supplying the local population and local processing needs. Volume is crucial. We need to focus on producing in a sustainable manner, which requires proper strategies, coordination, collaboration, and synergy.

What does the horticulture strategy mean for your association?

We have been urging the government to create a strategy in collaboration with relevant stakeholders. The development of the strategy began three years ago. There was a previous strategy focused on smallholder farmers.

The current strategy is being reviewed to align with current economic reforms and international trends. Proper implementation of this strategy could make a significant difference. It aims to address bottlenecks and make Ethiopia competitive in the global horticulture industry supply chain.

These are the questions I have for you today. If you have any additional points to add, please feel free to do so.

I believe that the future of Ethiopia lies in horticulture. We can generate significant and respectable employment opportunities within this sector. This will necessitate collaboration between the government, private sector, and development partners. By doing so, we can effectively combat unemployment and underemployment in Ethiopia.

By supplying processing companies, we can potentially generate billions for Ethiopia. To achieve this, we must establish proactive frameworks to bolster the industry.

Thank you for your time and willingness.

Don't mention it.

Society

Commitment, effort pays off

BY LEULSEGED WORKU

Ethiopia is among the countries that have been aggressively working to end all forms of harmful traditional practices that affect the health and wellbeing of young girls and women. As a result, the country has achieved encouraging results in addressing issues concerning Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and child marriage. Mainly, following the works carried out by joining hands with religious leaders, elders, faith communities and stakeholders, positive results are being witnessed- it was possible to reduce child marriage and FGM meaningfully.

The recent recognition and award given to Ethiopia by the United Nations Population Fund- 2024 UN Population Award for Efforts against Child Marriage, FGM, is an indication.

In the award ceremony which was held at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, Women and Social Affairs Minister, Ergogie Tesfaye (PhD), accepted the United Nations Population Award on behalf of the National Alliance to End Child Marriage and FGM.

Speaking on the occasion, Minister Ergogie said that the special emphasis that the Ethiopian government has given to eliminate all forms of harmful traditional practices like child marriage and female genital mutilation (FGM), and violence against women and girls by devising regulatory framework, policy, and programmatic interventions, is bearing positive results.



Women and Social Affairs Minister, Ergogie Tesfaye (PhD) receiving the award

Ergogie also emphasized that this global recognition will further bolster Ethiopia's steadfast commitment to gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.

Indeed, early marriage and FGM, practices that robbed many of young girls' childhood dream and their future prospects had been a deeply entrenched tradition in many parts of Ethiopia. However, seeing the seriousness of the problem, the government, together with several stakeholders, has been engaging in various awareness campaigns, legal reforms and support programs to combat the issues. Those campaigns carried out focusing on families, communities and young girls themselves, have raised awareness about the negative impacts of early marriage.

Equally, legal measures and community engagement programs are implemented by all concerned bodies at all levels to

address the challenges and end against early marriage.

Female Genital Mutilation, the other harmful traditional practice with severe health consequences, is also a focal point of Ethiopia's effort to promote gender equality and ensure women's rights.

Using the available means- policy framework, legal measures and strategies, as well as community engagement- the government is doing its level best to curb FGM and its undesirable social, health and economic costs. In turn, its efforts are bearing fruits with declining rates of the practices in communities across the country, particularly among rural communities.

As Ethiopia continues on its path towards gender equality and women's empowerment, the progress made in combating early marriage and FGM serves as a beacon of

hope; and the 2024 award Ethiopia received from the United Nations Population Fund for Efforts against child marriage and FGM serves as an inspiration for other nations facing similar challenges.

By prioritizing the rights and well-being of its women and girls, Ethiopia is not only transforming individual lives but also building a more inclusive and just society for generations to come.

The United Nations Population Award, established by the United Nations General Assembly in 1981, is presented to individuals and institutions with outstanding contributions to population and reproductive health.

In this regard, the National Alliance to End Child Marriage and FGM in Ethiopia, established in 2012, was recognized in the institutional category.

This strategic partnership and coordination platform brings together government sectors, civil society organizations, UN agencies, development partners, research institutions, and faith-based actors. And this synergy between and among the Alliance, the government and non-governmental institutions, faith-based organizations, research institutions, development partners and UN agencies, would yield positive outcome to the national efforts to end child, early, and forced marriages and FGM in Ethiopia, it was stated.

The award ceremony was attended by United Nations leaders and officials, as well as representatives from member states and international organizations.

Reviving print media: Adapting to thrive in the digital age

BY BILAL DERSO

Amidst the digital revolution and modern media technologies, traditional media is facing significant challenges. The survival of conventional print media hinges on adopting new and innovative approaches.

While readership declines are notable in the Western world, there are positive trends elsewhere. The 2022 World Press Trends Survey by the World Association of Newspapers (WAN) indicates increasing print circulation in Asia, Latin America, and Africa.

Since the lifting of censorship in the early 1990s and the subsequent media reforms, Ethiopia's print media has expanded significantly. Newspapers have become relatively active in agenda-setting, now given more freedom to operate. However, their limited number and concentration in Addis Ababa hinder their vibrancy and competition with digital platforms.

Addis Ababa University Journalism Associate Professor Teshager Shiferaw (PhD) highlighted the political, financial, and technological constraints facing print media in Ethiopia and Africa. Despite these challenges, some newspapers have endured. Teshager believes that dedicated journalists can lead the way in ensuring print media's survival. "The key question is whether we will adapt to remain relevant," he said.

Teshager also advocated for the coexistence



of multiple media platforms. Print and online media can support each other in promoting development and democratic processes, contributing to an engaged citizenry and true media pluralism.

Free speech and media are no longer solely the domain of journalists; they are rights for all people. Combining traditional and new media can boost the fight for freedom of expression and access to information globally, Teshager remarked.

Veteran journalist and media consultant Eshetu Geletu emphasized that print journalists must adapt and innovate to stay relevant, just as they did with the advent of television and radio. "The biggest danger to newspapers is losing public support," he stated. Enhancing professionalism, investigative skills, and ethical commitment among journalists is crucial to maintaining credibility and community connections.

Eshetu suggested cross-border collaboration

in investigative reporting and publishing in local languages as strategies for newspapers to remain competitive. Additionally, providing SMS pages to connect people and government can be a successful innovation for local newspapers.

Teshager noted that in a fast-paced media landscape, journalists must adapt their skills for both print and online platforms. Committed journalists have always risen to the challenge of a deadline-driven environment.

The Inability to distinguish between hate speech and free speech on social media can lead to calls for government regulation of online expression. Media literacy campaigns are essential to help people make the most of online resources.

Additionally, the growing practice of citizen journalism is challenging conventional media, as the public tends to get information from social platforms, which can lead to

misinformation and conflicts. Due attention is needed to enhance the quality and credibility of conventional media to deter society's growing dependence on rumors and fake news.

Ultimately, there will be a demand for reliable news and information, and newspapers must be ready to meet this need, both experts expressed conviction.

The basis of any media is the political economy of the country it operates in, and Ethiopia's rapid economic growth has transformed the country's print outlets toward commercialization, as broadcasters receive large-scale advertisements and resources for their content.

Experts said that universities and other higher learning institutions must nurture professionally-equipped journalists. The government's efforts and media's role are also crucial in enhancing public media literacy to create a critical audience.



International

EU's carbon border tax mechanism unfair to developing countries: CSE

A new report by Delhi-based think tank Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) has criticised the European Union's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) as an unfair burden on developing countries. Policies like the CBAM shift the responsibility of decarbonising heavy industrial sectors onto the Global South, creating obstacles to development, CSE said in a statement released on July 18, 2024.

The CBAM, announced in 2022, taxes imports like iron, steel, cement, aluminium and fertilisers based on the carbon emissions used in their production. This aims to level the playing field for European companies facing stricter environmental regulations. However, experts at the CSE argued that developing countries, which often have less developed economies and rely on heavier industries, will be disproportionately impacted.

Sunita Narain, director general of CSE, emphasised the need for climate justice in trade policies. She pointed out that developed nations, which historically emitted more greenhouse gases, are placing the financial burden of transitioning to cleaner technologies on developing countries.

"Measures like CBAM are unilateral measures and shift the burden of the transition to the developing world. This, when developed countries themselves have

not reduced their emissions sufficiently and continue to occupy carbon space. What is of particular concern is that such measures may further hurt the economies of countries in the South, restricting their abilities to decarbonise," Narain said in a statement.

The report launch coincided with a webinar by the think tank. Aside from Narain, panellists at the webinar included Claudia Contreras, economic affairs officer at UNCTAD (UN Trade and Development); Faten Aggad, executive director, African Future Policies Hub; Avantika Goswami, programme manager, Climate Change, CSE and Trishant Dev, programme officer, Climate Change, CSE.

Developing nations are unfairly penalised by the CBAM, which overlooks the historical factors that have shaped their current circumstances, Goswami said in the press statement. "The CBAM is a clear violation of the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities (CBDR) enshrined in the Paris Agreement and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change," she said.

Contreras pointed out that policies like CBAM should be designed and developed in alignment with the Paris Agreement, taking into consideration whether other countries have the capacity to comply.

"Despite Africa's historical contribution being under 4 per cent of global GHG

emissions, CBAM comes across as an attempt by the EU to shift the burden of decarbonisation to other countries without providing the necessary financial or large-scale technical support, such as accounting systems," Aggad stated.

The CSE report recommended the EU allocate revenue from CBAM to support developing countries' shift to low-carbon manufacturing, increase overall climate finance for developing nations and exempt the most vulnerable countries from the CBAM tax.

The report also suggested several strategies for developing countries to manage the CBAM's impact. These are: implementing sectoral mitigation plans that outline emissions reduction targets; considering a domestic carbon tax on exports to create a decarbonisation fund; diversifying production processes for different markets, with a priority on greener methods for regions with CBAMs, and exploring a "historical polluter tax" on developed countries to fund their own decarbonisation efforts.

The CSE emphasised the need for climate-friendly trade policies that consider the historical responsibility of developed nations and prioritise a just transition for developing economies.

Source: downtoearth.org

Urgent action needed as malaria resists key drug

Millions of lives are at risk unless urgent and radical action is taken to stop drug-resistant malaria spreading in Africa, scientists warn. Malaria parasites that can shrug off the effects of the critical drug artemisinin are now well-established in East Africa.

Resistance levels have soared in some areas from fewer than 1% to more than 20% of cases in the space of three years. The last time resistance to an antimalarial spread in Africa it led to a tripling in the number of children dying. Twenty-eight leading malaria scientists from 10 countries have made the call to action in the journal *Science*.

Artemisinin kills the malaria parasite and is the cornerstone of treatment. Parasites that could resist artemisinin evolved for the first time in Africa in Rwanda, and then separately in Uganda and Eritrea.

These resistant parasites have spread within their countries and across borders. Now, more than 10% of malaria cases are caused by resistant parasites in Ethiopia, Eritrea, Rwanda, Uganda and Tanzania.

"Now is the time to act before millions of people die due to increasingly ineffective antimalarial treatments," said Prof Olugbenga Mokuolu, from the department of paediatrics at the University of Ilorin in Nigeria.

In 2016, resistant strains were hardly being detected in northern Uganda. By 2019, more than 20% of parasites tested were resistant in several regions.

The group of scientists say the further spread of these resistant parasites is "inexorable". Dr Mehul Dhorda, from the Mahidol Oxford Tropical Medicine Research Unit in Thailand, told me it was still uncertain how quickly that would happen.

However, something similar has already played out in South East Asia, where artemisinin-based treatments started to fail. "The time from first detection to when it was overwhelmingly prevalent was 10 to 15 years," he said.

Source: BBC

Minister laments effects of climate change on developing countries

The Minister of Environment, Balarabe Abbas Lawal, has expressed concern over the effects of the ravaging climate change globally, saying Nigeria as a developing country is the worst hit.

He said Nigeria and Africa as a whole contributed the least, in terms of emission of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere, but unfortunately, they were the worst hit by the impacts of climate change due to limited adaptive capacity to cope with the impacts.

Hon Lawal represented by Mrs Uduak Ekpa made this known at Coal City University Enugu during the maiden climate justice and just energy transition in developing countries conferences in honour of Prof. Chinedum Nwajiuba's 60th birthday.

Recall that Prof. Chinedu Nwaniuba was the former Vice-Chancellor, Federal University Ndufu Alike Ikwo in Ebonyi State and later elected as the Chair of the Board, West African Science Service Centre on Climate Change and Adapted Land Use (WASCAL).

He disclosed that climate justice and just energy transition is at the centre of the development discourse in Africa and globally because energy is a key driver of economic and social wellbeing everywhere.

He declared that federal government in its effort to ensure a just and equitable energy transition, has launched the National Clean Cooking policy with the overall goal of providing sustainable adaptable forms of clean energy and low-carbon energy access to all Nigerians.

"Today's event is uniquely special because we are honouring and celebrating an embodiment of excellence and leadership, an icon, a model and global masterpiece and a voice in climate change and energy space.

"Climate change is one of the most critical global challenges of our times with attendant environmental, cultural, political and socioeconomic consequences. This is evident as millions of vulnerable people face disproportionate challenges in terms of extreme events, health effects, food, water, and livelihood security, migration and forced displacement, loss of cultural identity, and other related risks.

"These disproportionately far-reaching consequences of climate change call for the urgent need for climate justice and just energy transition.

"Government on its part will continue to create enabling environment for all, and collaborate with relevant stakeholders, NGO, CBO and international organizations in ensuring equitable access to resource and u of energy sources, strengthen energy infrastructure, create public awareness and education, build capacities and skills, engage community, create green jobs and address security concerns in meeting its national commitment. To this end, the Ministry is open for collaboration and partnership," he said.

Former House of Representatives, Hon Sam Onuigbo delivering a lecture with a topic, "Climate change Act: Implications

for climate action in Nigeria, called for inclusion of climate change in school curriculum to ensure early awareness and understanding to be able to tackle it.

He declared that legislation would play a critical role in tacking the climate change consequences in the country if properly enforced.

"Parliamentarian can play a crucial role in addressing this challenge, ensuring government accountability, and effectiveness as well as providing a vital knowledge link with constituents, both aspects being important in ensuring a country's response and resilience to climate change. Parliamentarians also have the opportunity to promote the voice of citizens at home and during international negotiations."

"This aptly captures the critical role of legislators in the battle against climate change. Without legislators making the laws, providing oversight, engendering knowledge sharing with their constituents, and generally holding everyone accountable, no country will effectively meet its climate change goals and obligations.

"It is therefore appropriate to state here that, aware of the importance of the role of legislation for climate change, the government of the United Kingdom set the ball rolling in 2008 with the first standalone climate change legislation. Other countries of the world followed suit," he said.

Source: vanguardngr.com

Verbatim and Caption



CFA ratification by South Sudan historic moment: PM Abiy

The ratification of the Nile River Basin's Cooperative Framework Agreement (CFA) by South Sudan is a historic moment for Ethiopia. This diplomatic milestone marks a significant step in our collective aspiration for regional cooperation in the Nile Basin.

The ratification will provide impetus for working towards the common good of our people through the establishment of the Nile Basin Commission.

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) said after South Sudan ratified CFA in its parliament



South Sudan's CFA ratification big diplomatic achievement: Prof. Yacob

The ratification of the Cooperation Framework Agreement (CFA) of the Nile Basin Initiative by South Sudan showcased Ethiopia's diplomatic success. South Sudan's ratification of the CFA that Ethiopia proposed for fair and proper utilization of the Nile River waters is a diplomatic success.

The CFA ratification benefits not only Ethiopia but also other riparian countries, including South Sudan itself. Ethiopia's campaign in this process was almost a struggle and achieving such diplomatic success is a triumph against colonial agreements. Riparian countries need to work together to utilize the Nile water equitably.

Professor Yacob Arsano, Researcher at Addis Ababa University

Ethiopia home to unique history, beautiful culture: Nani

Ethiopia is one of most beautiful nations in the world; football stars must come and visit this magnificent country. I am satisfied by Ethiopian hospitality.

This country is beautiful and has a lot of potentials in every aspect. I have visited some historical places like the historic Adwa Victory Memorial, National Museum and Ethiopian Air Force Headquarters and that was interesting.

I came here to share my all experiences and I want to motivate young players in Ethiopia and Africa as a whole.

Luis Nani, Portuguese professional footballer and former Manchester United player



Ethiopia attracts 3.8 billion USD FDI in 2023/24: EIC Commissioner

Ethiopia has attracted 3.82 billion USD Foreign Direct Investments (FDI) during the concluded Ethiopian budget year. With improved business climate, investment promotion, provision of one stop service, FDI inflow shows significant development.

With continuous promotions and investment services, Ethiopia has attracted 3.82 billion USD foreign direct investments during the budget year. The FDI inflow has shown over 11.5 percent increment compared to the previous year.

Hanna Arayaselassie, Commissioner, Ethiopian Investment Commission



Ethiopia earns 3.8 billion USD from export in 2023/24: Minister

Ethiopia has earned some 3.8 billion USD from export during the concluded Ethiopian Fiscal Year. Compared to some period of last fiscal year, the performance shows 4.5 percent increment.

From the generated income from export, the agriculture sector takes the lead by 76.43 percent, followed by manufacturing and mining.

Integration is vital to improve competitiveness of exports and to be successful in international trade, it

Kasahun Gofe (PhD), Minister, Trade and Regional Integration