



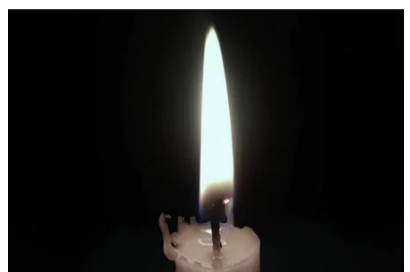
The Ethiopian Herald

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Vol. LXXX No 275 27 JULY 2024 - Hamle 20, 2016 **Saturday** Price Birr 10.00



House declares three-day mourning for Gofa's landslide victims

BY STAFF REPORTER

ADDIS ABABA - Following 257 death toll from a landslide in Gofa Zone, the House of People's Representatives (HoPR) declared a three-day mourning period starting today.

The house stated that the decision was made under article 22, sub article of 2 of the revised proclamation No .654/2001, as amended by proclamation No.863/2006.

During the mourning period, the Ethiopian national flag will be flown at half-mast across the country, on Ethiopian ships and at Ethiopian embassies and consulates offices.

The HoPR also expressed condolences to the families of the victims and the Ethiopian People.

Mitigating landslide hazards in Ethiopia

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

Albeit Ethiopia is prone to drought, flashfloods and some harsh weather impacts, it is less likely vulnerable a landslide that causes

massive damage. This week, the country has experienced one of the severe landslides in Gofa Zone of South Ethiopia state.

A mudslide of saturated silt and water was the reason behind the incident that initially

occurred last Sunday and continued to happen to the next consecutive two days thereby claiming many lives and displaced several citizens.

See Mitigating landslide ... Page 3



UN to convene for new tax convention to scrap Africa's domestic revenue gap

BY ZEKARIAS WOLDEMARIAM

ADDIS ABABA - The United Nations will convene next week to negotiate and agree on terms of reference for a new international convention on Tax Cooperation, according to UN Policy Analyst.

See UN to convene ... Page 3

ESL ready to operate in line with sea outlet ambition

- Country withstanding Red Sea crisis

BY EYUEL KIFLU

ADDIS ABABA - Ethiopian Shipping and Logistics (ESL) is set and ready to operate in accordance with the country's strategic port access and sea outlet interests.

Risk management and mitigation efforts also helped the country's commercial activities to stay unharmed albeit the growing crisis

See ESL ready ... Page 3



Ethiopia expresses dismay over Somali officials' irresponsible statements

BY STAFF REPORTER

ADDIS ABABA - Ethiopia expressed dismayed by the unwarranted and irresponsible statements

made by senior officials of the government of Somalia on various occasions attempting to deny the critical role of Ethiopia in helping to rebuild the state of Somalia.

See Ethiopia expresses ... Page 3

News

UN concludes FfD4 first PrepCom conference

• Ethiopia suggests Int'l institutions' policy reform

BY YESUF ENDRIS

ADDIS ABABA - United Nations' first session of the Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) for the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development (FfD4) concluded yesterday.

The hosting Country, Ethiopia and many Countries represented in the Conference suggested international organizations' policy reform.

In press briefing following the conclusion of the session, Finance Minister Ahmed Shide said that the conference has underscored the urgency of common global challenges such as climate change, instabilities and geopolitical crisis.

Reforms accommodating innovative and inclusive solutions have been suggested by participants of the conference, he highlighted.

There has been commitment from all countries to accelerate progress to achieve the sustainable development goals by leveraging effective financing mechanisms. On the other note, sustainable debt was one major issue raised during the conference. Responsible borrowing and lending, and debt restructuring have been suggested to manage the debt crisis, according to him.



Ahmed Shide

Ahmed also said that the financial architecture needs reforms as many countries suggest on the conference. Critical issues like reforming global financial institutions were thoroughly discussed. The reform on institutions should consider the volatility of the global financial issues.

Multilateralism has been a central theme of Ethiopia and developing countries. Delegates participated in the preparatory conference also reaffirmed for new cooperation mechanisms, solidarity for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, he added.

The FfD4 Executive Secretary Li Junhua, on his part indicated that financial institutions and CSOs, they all came here for the same goal. "Almost 1,000 participants, including

over 40 ministers, were participated in the conference."

Fighting poverty and hunger, climate change, inequality and injustice are still major questions in financial issues, he highlighted.

Only some portion of the SDG are on track to be achieved by 2030, financing for SDGs is needed to be revised and the preoperational conference was fruitful in proposing some major agendas to be presented in the Financing for Development Conference, he remarked.

Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, Clever Gatete praised Ethiopia for hosting the conference with hospitable manner.

He also suggested Public-Private Partnership and new financial policies are critically needed for developing countries. Governments should tap the resource accumulated on private sectors so as to finance developmental projects. A document that will help countries to enhance financing for development will be unveiled in the final conference of the fourth financing for Development conference, he added.

Borrower countries are facing financial challenges to return the debt because of shortage of foreign currencies, he noted.

Ethiopia's MelkaKunture, Balchit become world heritage: UNESCO

BY STAFF REPORTER

ADDIS ABABA – The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has registered Ethiopia's MelkaKunture and Balchit, archaeological and paleontological sites on its world heritage list.

UNESCO announced that the MelkaKunture and Balchit archaeological and paleontological sites in the Highland Area of Ethiopia have been inscribed on the World Heritage list during the 46th session of the World Heritage Committee, which is taking place in India, from July 21-31, 2024.

The registration of these new sites has enabled Ethiopia to have 12 World Heritage Sites thereby becoming the first African nation with the largest number of such sites in the continent, the organization said.

Located in the Upper Awash Valley in Ethiopia, the serial property is a cluster of prehistoric sites that preserve archaeological and paleontological records – including footprints – that testify to the area's occupation by the hominin groups from two million years ago, it noted.

In her message to the Committee, Tourism Minister Nasise Chali expressed that the registration of the sites as world heritage means a lot as it happens at a time Ethiopians are commemorating the 50th year of the discovery of Lucy - a 3.2 million-year old fossil skeleton of a human ancestor.

She said the addition of the sites to the world heritage list proves the fact that Ethiopia is land of origins.

The minister also pledged that her government would play its role to protect the heritage.

MelkaKunture and Balchit archaeological and paleontological sites are located on the riverside of Awash, 50km away from Addis Ababa.

The sites, situated about 2,000 to 2,200 meters above sea level, yielded *Homo erectus*, *Homo heidelbergensis* and archaic *Homo sapiens* fossils, documented in well-dated strata in association with various tools made from volcanic rocks.

The cultural sequence includes four consecutive phases of the Oldowan, Acheulean, Middle Stone Age and Late Stone Age techno-complexes. Fragments of palaeo-landscapes, preserved buried under volcanic and sedimentary deposits with fossil fauna and flora, allow reconstruction of the high-mountain ecosystem of the Ethiopian Highlands during the Pleistocene. Conclusions can thus be drawn on the adaptation of hominin groups to the challenges and climatic conditions of high altitudes, according to UNESCO.

MoH set to provide 2 mln citizens with free healthcare

• Launches summer health sector volunteerism program

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

ADDISABABA – Some two million citizens would receive free healthcare services in the summer volunteerism program, Ministry of Health (MoH) announced.

The Ministry in collaboration with the EkaKotebe General Hospital and St. Paul's Hospital launched a summer volunteer program in the health sector to provide free healthcare services.

Speaking at the launching ceremony, MoH Minister Mekdes Daba (MD) stated yesterday that the Ministry has set to provide free healthcare services to some two million citizens, including citizens who cannot afford health care costs, in the summer volunteering campaign.

According to her, some 100, 000 citizens would receive free healthcare services in EkaKotebe and St. Paul's Hospitals in the first week of the campaign.

Different medical services would be provided to economically vulnerable societies during the coming two months so that the MoH planned to collect 40, 000 unit blood, Mekdes expressed.

It has also planned to plant half a million tree seedlings, construct 15 shelters and undertake other activities as part of its summer volunteerism program. The initiative needed the involvement of private



and public health institutions as well as all stakeholders, she said.

"Volunteer service campaign shouldn't be practiced only in summer season, but it should be continued during the whole seasons. Over the past five years, the MoH provided medical treatment to some 3 million citizens. The Ministry has planted some 11 million tree seedlings across the country in collaboration with states

health bureaus, hospitals, employees and respective institutions," she noted.

For his part, EkaKotebe General Hospital Executive Manager, Abel Tesfaye (MD) said that the hospital has set to provide free healthcare services to 40 to 50, 000 citizens within seven days.

And the hospital has been working to support health professionals to cultivate a culture of medical volunteerism, he added.

News

ESL ready...

in the strategic region of the Red Sea, ESL disclosed.

While welcoming the country's sea outlet quest, the organization also expressed its readiness to use any available alternatives for operations.

ESL's plans involve effectively utilizing the Lamu Port in Kenya, in addition to seeking other alternative sea outlets, to complement the country's main import and export gateway through the Djibouti Port, said Beriso Amelo, the CEO of ESL, in a presser held yesterday.

"Based on our economic growth, we need to have alternative ports," Amelo said. "For the future, we are looking to use the Lamu Port effectively, in addition to seeking other alternative ports. If the country gets any alternative ports, we are ready to adjust our ships and trucks to move there and provide our services."

Currently, the Djibouti Port serves as the primary entry and exit point for Ethiopia's commercial activities. However, the shipping service provider also utilizes the Mombasa Port in Kenya for container goods imports, though less frequently.

Capitan Wondwossen Kassa, the Deputy CEO for the Shipping Sector at ESL, highlighted that the ongoing Red Sea crisis has not significantly impacted the country's commercial activities. "The crisis is a very big challenge; however, we tackle the problem to the best of our capacity," he said.

"Without any interruption, cargoes are entering the country, and export cargoes are being exported in a timely manner. Despite the challenge, ESL has managed to import goods without any price changes, effectively managing inflation and the macro economy."

To further bolster its capabilities, ESL is planning to collaborate with the federal government to acquire six additional ships in the coming year, adding to its current fleet of ten vessels.

UN to convene for new tax convention...

The UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN-DESA) Policy Analysis Chief Oliver Schwank, told *The Ethiopian Herald* that the negotiation is scheduled to take place next week in New York and aims to discuss on Terms of Reference for a new international Convention on Tax Cooperation.

During the course of the interview, Schwank pointed out that huge financing gap as the major drawback for failure to realize the SDG particularly for Africa which is already paying 20% to 30% of its GDP to pay debt the financing gap becomes even worse.

He, therefore, stressed that along with the need to increase generous development financing through development banks African countries should also work more on domestic resource mobilization. One of the major challenges to the countries domestic resource mobilization is illicit financial flow and tax evasion, among others.

He noted that the tax evasion and illicit

flows are outcomes of the countries efforts to give incentives to attract more foreign investment. However, companies establish their operation in different countries and use different accounting systems to escape paying taxes to one or more the countries they invest in.

"And it's understandable to why countries do this. But it undermines the tax base. The second thing is, it's kind of the illicit activities and these flows are very significant in the billions of dollars."

Schwank indicated that this is not a problem that a country can conquer alone, though it can put in place better tax administration or good governance. This measure alone is not enough to fully control the illicit financial flow and tax evasion, so the countries should come together towards a better international agreement.

"It's too easy at the moment for these actors with different accounting measures, to avoid the responsibility to contribute their fair share in the countries where

they operate in. Then the host countries where these corporate investors operate are left empty handed; they do not get their fair share of revenue. And, that's not something a country can address on its own"

Accordingly African countries have brought the discussion to the United Nations where there will be a negotiation in New York next week to agree on terms of Reference for a new international convention on tax cooperation. He further lauded the active role of African states in both the financing for development discussion as well as the planned negotiation on tax convention.

"And just next week, actually, there'll be negotiations in New York at the United Nations to agree on Terms of Reference for a new international convention on tax cooperation, a framework convention, and this discussions, are happening only because of the leadership of the African group. So they have brought this issue to the international community," Schwank said.

Ethiopia expresses dismay...

In a statement released by the Office of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs yesterday Ethiopia is closely following the repeated provocative statements by the Government of Somalia.

Contrary to the baseless accusations of the government of Somalia, Ethiopia has rather been sacrificing in the service of peace and stability of the brotherly people of Somalia for more than three decades, Office of the Spokesperson underlined.

"Ethiopia is, thus, dismayed by the unwarranted and irresponsible statements made by senior officials of the Somalia on various occasions attempting to deny the critical role of Ethiopia in helping to rebuild the state of Somalia."

Bearing in mind its strong conviction for regional interdependence, the statement said, adding that cultural ties and historical relationships cemented with blood and sweat, Ethiopia did not choose to respond to the baseless accusations of the authorities in Somalia.

Ethiopia, rather, preferred the path of patience and positive engagement for the common good of our peoples, statement added.

"It should be underlined that, Ethiopia is deeply concerned about the proliferation of trafficking of small arms and light weapons in the Horn of Africa," Office of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated.

As the region is challenged by ongoing conflicts, unchecked coastal lines, as well as unsecured borders, it is imperative for countries of the region to coordinate their efforts in fighting such crimes, it said.

Ethiopia reiterated its steadfastness in fighting terrorism and proliferation of illegal trafficking of small arms, light weapons and Improvised Explosive Devices.

"Ethiopia will continue to stand on the side of the brotherly people of Somalia to fulfill their aspiration for sustainable peace, stability, economic development and regional cooperation," statement stressed.

Mitigating landslide hazards in...

Raising alarms on additional incident might happen in some parts of the country, scholars in the field suggested that implementing a strategic and consistent environment protection is vital to prevent the incident from happening again.

Most of landslides in Ethiopia are commonly triggered by heavy seasonal rainfall and earthquake occurrences causing significant loss to human and animal lives, damaging infrastructures especially in highland areas.

Addis Ababa University Soil Science Expert Prof. Mohammed Hassan believed that the landslide occurred in Gofa Zone of South Ethiopia state is one of the landslide accidents that caused more life loss. "However, there was a possibility to manage and minimize the damage if we were prepared well."

He told The Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA)

that there was a threat as the accident was happened over the previous years. The mudslide in this area is not happening for the first time although the magnitude of the incident varies. There was a threat that a landslide would occur around Lake Abaya in the zone.

High volume rain is one of causes that aggravates landslide in the area. There was a possibility to minimize the shock if soil and river basin development activities were performed effectively.

A sediment and water have been deposited in the area which turned out to be a mudslide driven by heavy rain so that it caused a huge damage, he said, while suggesting that facilitating soil and river basin development efforts would reduce such kind of risks in this area.

Mohammed stressed that similar disaster

might have happened in the slippery Entoto area of Addis Ababa or the vast deposit of loose soil, but doesn't happen yet due to the presence of enough woods there.

Therefore, the proper implementation of environment protection in slippery areas is crucial to mitigate climate change impacts including landslide. He mentioned that mudslide was repeatedly happening in other parts of the country mainly in Dessie and its surroundings. It needs planting trees, strengthening soil and water protection activities and others in slippery areas to overcome the incident, he underscored.

For his part, Addis Ababa University Geophysics Space Science and Astronomy Institute Head, Prof. Atalay Ayele stated that the repeated occurrence of landslide in southern Ethiopia during summer season is the result of absence of soil and water protection works.

The depletion of forests and underground water, repeated agricultural activity and others would lead to landslide. He agreed with Mohamed's point of view in need of strengthening soil and water preservation works to avert the possible hazards in risky areas in the future.

Moreover, the effort demands prioritizing awareness creation to strengthen forest development in areas that are prone to landslide. Specifically, mitigating the landslide risk requires adequate drainage of slopes in order to reduce water infiltration, he pointed out.

Moreover, appropriate site selection for buildings, transferring risky settlements, accurate geological control of works, and education campaigns are also among the solutions strongly recommended by the scholars.

Opinion

Is it forcibly imposed phenomenon or entertained by will.....?

BY MENGESHA AMARE

The paradoxical revelations reflecting Ethiopia, it is endowed with a range of natural resources and untapped wealth, but labeled as a poor, aid-dependent where some segments of its population lead a subsistence life, have given anyone hard time in due course of developing a firm stance. If a given nation is rich, how will they be called poor, where is the missing link? Such tough but simple questions need to be well replied to, too.

Unequivocally, every country in the universe houses poor people, who live in poor housing and struggle to afford basic goods and services like having meal for themselves and their families, transport, clothing among others. It is natural as nothing is absolute everywhere. However, why are the nations forced to host people devoid of social, economic and political and even cultural wealth? What is poverty? Or what is dearth? Where does it emanate from? How could it be tackled?

Poverty is a manmade or circumstance-oriented phenomenon and socio-philosophical facet, not an innate socio-economical feature of human race. Yes, it is a multidimensional and dynamic concept having multiple causes that exhibit economic, social and political characteristics and hence, poverty reduction policies require multidimensional approaches and strategies when it comes to a country level.

The Ethiopian government has devised a range of means to defeat poverty and underdevelopment via successfully reducing poverty. Poverty reduction policies have to be one of the priority policy targets of the Ethiopian government and the pillars of external financial assistance. The challenges to reduce poverty are formidable in Ethiopia where poverty is deep and widespread, income is extremely low, growth rate is weak, and so is income distribution uneven. Not just economic growth, but also the distribution of that growth matters. If the inequality of income increases, the poorest can be left behind, and there is no chance at all to leave poverty behind.

Locally, nationally, regionally, even globally, achieving sustainable economic growth helps the nation achieve the dignity and standard of living citizens all deserve. Truly speaking, economies with remarkable growth rate could not achieve sustainable poverty reduction if the growth process does not generate productive job opportunities, mobility, and accumulation of assets and capital for an increasing share of the population.

Poverty in Ethiopia has resulted from economic, political, demographic, geographic, environmental, and policy causes. Ethiopia is labeled as one of the poorest countries where low income and productivity, weak capital accumulation and investment, high levels of unemployment and underemployment are the main features of the economy.

The agrarian based subsistence economy has been subject to the vagaries of natural forces and hostile political environment and hence it could not achieve sustained economic growth as well as structural transformation. When an economy finds itself in such a situation,

it takes structural change and fundamental political and institutional reforms to enable economic agents realize their economic potentials and improve their productivity and generate improvement in living standards.

The central challenge of economic growth and poverty reduction in Ethiopia is essentially how to generate sustainable rise in the productivity of the labor force in agriculture, improve the application of modern and appropriate technology and inputs in the sector, reduce its vulnerability to shocks, secure non-farm related activities to the rural residents and enable the sector play a leading role in growth process of the country.

The agriculture sector has to be made capable of supporting a rapidly increasing rural population at its prevailing state of technology, labor productivity and policy environment. As productivity level of the farmers remain near subsistence, well framed and organized agricultural activities have to be entertained as it is a critical step to make a difference.

Capital investment, application of modern and improved agricultural production technology, secured landownership, and effective financial services are some of the factors that could initiate and sustain improvement in productivity in agriculture. The main impediments to poverty reduction in Ethiopia emerge from a complex web of interaction of economic, political, demographic, social, geographic, and institutional factors and hence poverty reduction policies should address these underlying forces to develop strategies with lasting effects. Poverty generally refers to the inability of households to provide sufficient subsistence and to lead a decent economic and social life.

A strategy to reduce poverty should therefore be undertaken with a clear understanding of what mechanisms influence the situation and dynamics of poverty in Ethiopia. The good thing is the nation is working towards this end.

Cognizant of the fact that economic growth is indeed the most powerful instrument to reduce poverty provided that it creates employment opportunities to the poor, increases the demand for factors that the poor owns, and creates the condition in which the poor develop the capability to accumulate productive assets that prepare them for productive and better life, Ethiopia has been working from dawn to dusk along this line.

Since Ethiopia lacks nothing except commitment and strategy to successfully exploit its untapped resources and promote the working culture of the society, it is now high time to deal with every problem and shortcomings with regard to efficiently exploiting resources, human capital and societal unity and empowerment of the farming community. Demographic forces also play a role in the accumulation of human capital among household members in which poor households with large family size would have difficulty in providing the necessary education and health services to enable their children with more chances to escape poverty.

A nation with a population of more than 120 million people has to have the capacity to manage the resources be they are natural or

manmade possessions, to produce more and more. True, Ethiopia has about a third of its land very suitable or moderately suitable for crop cultivation so that a relatively minimum external input is necessary for crop development. In a country as predominantly rural as Ethiopia, it is necessary to modernize the agriculture sector for two principal reasons: to confidently feed the ever-increasing population growth and to support all other sectors via providing them with a range of inputs.

Unequivocally, the innermost economic and poverty stumbling block in Ethiopia is how to transform the agricultural sector for it would not trap millions of Ethiopians in its low level equilibrium. Improving agricultural productivity requires investment in physical and human capital and improved farming practice and technology with which farmers operate their farm or livestock.

Needles to state, Ethiopian agriculture is predominantly smallholding farming in which the decision making behavior of millions of vulnerable ones, in combination with natural forces, determines the aggregate output. Such a trying trend has to be prettily altered if the county is to successfully deal with poverty and see it off for good.

Moreover, infrastructural activities that could improve the social capital stock of the nation could have multiple benefits both in creating job opportunities as well as in improving the vibrancy of the rural sector in generating income for households. As in the majority of the nation, agricultural investment in smallholders farming comes only from farmers themselves and could not be undertaken by external forces, including the urban sector, foreign direct investors, or the government, the firm combined effort of all badly requires. In so doing, the fight against poverty will bear fruits.

Agriculture remains to be dominant for a foreseeable future in the economy and it is here that the most pressing challenges to poverty reduction concentrate. Ethiopian agriculture is burdened by lack of strategic policies that could transform the sector and enable the farmers to play important role in the economic development endeavor of the nation.

Poverty in Ethiopia could not be alleviated sustainably without fundamental political and institutional reform toward democratic good governance. Sustained poverty reduction in the Ethiopian setting could be achieved only if the bottlenecks and insecurities are removed from the shoulders of the peasantry which constitutes the overwhelming majority of the population.

It is therefore necessary to take timely action to accelerate the accumulation of physical and human capital, maintain and build upon endogenous social capital, undertake comprehensive policy reform measures that promote market forces and private sector development, pursue institutional reforms to reduce hurdles to full utilization of the potentials of the economy, and implement inclusive economic and political policies.

Expand irrigation schemes to reduce dependence on rain and insure food security,

improve methods of farming and increase the delivery of farm implements, produce drought-resistant crops that would ripen in a short period of time, promote voluntary resettlement, improve livestock marketing, provide professionals and the community with sustainable training.

Besides, development and conservation of natural resource, utilization of local water resources to increase access to water supply and ensure food security, establish seedling nurseries and plant the indigenous species, strengthen environmental protection, prevent deforestation by imposing more stringent fines on people who fell trees illegally, planting trees on denuded hills and promoting alternative sources of energy geothermal, wind, hydropower, among others, are of the pillars that have to be well underscored thereby helping the country defeat poverty.

Moreover, allowing foreign banks to work in partnerships with local banks as foreign banks help develop modern banking systems and contribute in foreign currency earnings and in building confidence of foreign investors.

Capacity building should also be seriously focused as it is as important as economic advancement itself since bolstering economic development in one way or another is a viable means to do away with this social menace.

The impact of education in alleviating poverty is significant in both rural and urban areas of the country, i.e. households with higher levels of literacy are less likely to fall into poverty than those households with lower levels of literacy. Investing in education should be one of the key elements in reducing poverty in the country.

A well-coordinated industrial strategy is also required to make the sector the engine of growth and strengthen its forward and backward linkages with the agriculture and service sectors to ensure sustainable growth. The service sector is significant in terms of both national output and employment. The centerpiece of growth and employment generation strategy should be to increase the productivity of the service sector. With improvement in transport and communication infrastructure, modernization of the marketing and trade sector and promotion of the tourism industry, the service industry should be able to generate more productive employment.

In sum, no question about it, poverty is not an innate phenomenon. Hence, it can be done away with from the soil at all. Having all things required for fulfilling any social, economic and even political interests, why is Ethiopia labeled as a poor nation, and how does poverty prevail, the root causes have to be well singled out and possible solutions need to be systematically devised thereby pushing the country steps forward via defeating poverty for good! As far as this writer's understanding is concerned, in the Ethiopian context, poverty is a phenomenon entertained by will!

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

Editorial

Best Airlines with exceptional service!

Ethiopian Airlines stands as a beacon of commendable achievement within Africa's aviation industry, recognized not only for its operational excellence but also as a symbol of continental pride and unity. Since its inception, the airline has been playing a pivotal role in connecting Africa to the world through a robust network spanning 138 international destinations. This expansive reach underscores Ethiopian Airlines' commitment to facilitating global connectivity and economic growth across the continent.

Beyond its fundamental role in passenger and cargo transport, Ethiopian Airlines has significantly invested in Africa's aviation infrastructure. This investment includes the establishment of modern training facilities and maintenance centers, essential for fostering local expertise and ensuring the highest standards of safety and efficiency in aviation operations. By prioritizing infrastructure development, Ethiopian Airlines contributes actively to enhancing the capabilities and sustainability of aviation across Africa.

The other unique feature of the airlines is its resilience in withstanding the adversity conditions. For instance, the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic brought about unparalleled challenges for the global aviation industry. However, Ethiopian Airlines demonstrated remarkable resilience and adaptability during this period. Its ability to navigate through the crisis while maintaining operational integrity and service excellence was acknowledged with the Global Recognition and Appreciation Award in 2024. This award not only highlights the airline's ability to thrive in challenging environments but also underscores its unwavering commitment to innovation and customer satisfaction.

Furthermore, Ethiopian Airlines' dedication to excellence is further evidenced by its consistent recognition as the Best Airline in Africa by Skytrax, a prestigious honor reflecting its exceptional service standards. The airline's commitment to passenger comfort and satisfaction is evident in its luxurious business class amenities, top-tier in-flight entertainment options, and reliable Wi-Fi connectivity, all of which have earned it accolades from various industry bodies and passengers alike.

In addition to its passenger services, Ethiopian Airlines has established itself as a leader in air cargo transportation within Africa. Named the African Cargo Airline of the Year, the airline's cargo operations play a crucial role in supporting regional trade and economic development by facilitating the efficient movement of goods across the continent and beyond. This dual capability in passenger and cargo services highlights Ethiopian Airlines' comprehensive contribution to the growth and connectivity of Africa's aviation sector.

As a symbol of African strength and progress, Ethiopian Airlines not only sets benchmarks for operational excellence but also embodies resilience and unity in the face of adversity. Its legacy of overcoming challenges and consistently exceeding industry standards has earned it numerous international awards and cemented its reputation as a source of pride for Africa. The airline's ability to maintain high service standards, while adapting to evolving market demands positions it as a leader in the global aviation landscape, reflecting its commitment to advancing Africa's aviation capabilities. Looking ahead, Ethiopian Airlines continues to innovate and expand its network, further solidifying its role as the premier airline in Africa.

In short, by leveraging its extensive experience, infrastructure investments, and commitment to customer satisfaction, the airline is poised to continue driving economic growth, connectivity, and unity across the continent. Ethiopian Airlines' enduring legacy as a symbol of African excellence ensures that it will remain at the forefront of Africa's aviation industry, inspiring future generations and shaping the future of air travel on the continent and beyond.



The Ethiopian Herald

Established in 1943

Published daily except Mondays
By The Ethiopian Press Agency

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Opinion

Waging war on modern agriculture and global nutrition

The World Economic Forum says the world faces a new crisis, "One-third of anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions come from food production." With the world's population expected to reach 10 billion people by 2050, it is therefore "urgent" that we launch a "radical" and "comprehensive" transformation of the global food system – from "reinventing" farming to "reimagining" how food is produced, processed, distributed, consumed and disposed of.

Reinforcing this message, Stop Ecocide Now founder Jojo Mehta expanded on Greta Thunberg's incendiary 2020 rant that "our house is on fire and you're fueling the flames." Farming is a "serious crime," equal to "genocide," Ms. Mehta told elites at the 2024 WEF meeting in Davos.

Their grasp of agriculture is epitomized by Michael Bloomberg's suggestion that anybody can be a farmer: "You dig a hole, you put a seed in, you put dirt on top, you add water, up comes the corn."

Modern farming and its supposedly dangerous greenhouse gas emissions are a tad more complicated.

Modern mechanized farming employs oil derivatives as fuel for equipment and feed stocks for herbicides and pesticides, natural gas to dry grain and make fertilizers, and livestock to provide protein.

Of course, natural forces can't drive climate hysteria and WEF-Gore-Biden anti-fossil-fuel agendas. Fear-mongering political, activist, media and academic elites therefore ignore them.

In the Real World, the wondrous reality is that, after centuries of excruciatingly slow progress, agricultural advances over the past 75 years have been nothing short of astonishing. Dr. Norman Borlaug's Green Revolution employed plant breeding techniques that multiplied yields of vital grain crops, saving hundreds of millions of lives.

Since 1950, American farmers increased per-acre corn yields by an incredible 500% and other crop yields by smaller but still amazing amounts – while using less used land, water and fuel ... and fewer fertilizers and pesticides per ton of produce. Their exports helped slash global hunger and malnutrition even further.

Meanwhile, despite supposed impacts from manmade climate change, farmers in Brazil, India and many other countries have also enjoyed record harvests.

Multiple miracle technologies contributed. Hybrid seeds combine valuable traits from different related plants. Biotech seeds protect crops against voracious insects and destructive viruses, while reducing water and pesticide demand. Virus-resistant biotech cultivars have even replaced endangered papayas in Hawaii, cassava and bananas in Africa, and other crops.

Nitrogen (ammonia) fertilizers, synthesized from natural gas and atmospheric nitrogen, have joined phosphorus and potassium in supercharging soils. Increased atmospheric carbon dioxide spurs and reduces water demand even further.

Long-lasting herbicides control weeds that would otherwise steal moisture and nutrients from crops – and enable farmers to utilize no-till farming that avoids breaking up soils, reduces

erosion, retains soil moisture and preserves vital soil organisms.

Technologies developed in Israel make it possible to grow an amazing array of crops in the Negev and Arava Deserts, which receive a fraction of the annual rainfall that Arizona gets. Desalination plants turn seawater into 80% of Israel's drinking water, dramatically reducing pressure on the Sea of Galilee, manmade reservoirs and groundwater supplies.

Israelis then recycle 90% of their home, business, school and hospital water – for use in agriculture, where drip irrigation delivers precise amounts of water precisely where crops and other plants need it, minimizing evaporation.

Huge high-tech tractors use GPS systems, sensors and other equipment to steer precise courses across fields, while constantly measuring soil composition, and injecting just the right kinds and amounts of fertilizers and herbicides, along with seeds, to ensure optimal harvests.

Not all these technologies are available across the globe. However, farmer can access information about both the technologies and the modern practices through online libraries and programs on cell phones.

Instead, this progress is under assault – by ill-advised or ill-intended, but well-funded organizations that want to turn the Green Revolution into Green Tyranny, Eco-Imperialism and global malnutrition.

Their hatred of biotech crops is intense and well-documented. But many also despise hybrid seeds. They want modern herbicides and insecticides banned, in favor of "natural" alternatives – which are often toxic to bees, fish, other animals and people and have not been tested for long-term harm to humans.

These agricultural anarchists also demand "natural" fertilizers, which typically provide a fraction of the nutrients that modern synthetic fertilizers do. At the very least, they want global organic farming, which would mean much lower crop yields per acre than conventional farming, and plowing many millions of additional acres of wildlife habitat and scenic land, to get the same amounts of food.

They say people in Africa, Asia and Latin America should practice subsistence farming – which they prefer to call "traditional" farming, Agro-Ecology, "food sovereignty," or the "right to choose" "culturally appropriate" food produced through "ecologically sound and sustainable methods," based on "indigenous agricultural knowledge and practices."

In plain English, Agro-Ecology is rabidly opposed to biotechnology, monoculture farming, non-organic fertilizers, chemical pesticides, and even mechanized equipment and hybrid seeds.

You can imagine how Agro-Ecologists would react if African farmers wanted to assert their food sovereignty, self-determination and right to choose by planting biotech Bt corn, to get higher yields, reduce pesticide use, enjoy better living standards and send their kids to school. The agro-anarchists would vilify them as vile supporters of violence against women, land-grabbing corporations, and expropriation of indigenous rights, genocide and other "crimes against humanity."

Source: Eurasia Review

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

Art & Culture

Addis in the rainy season, books

BY MULUGETA GUDETA

Addis Ababa is becoming one of the hottest cities in Africa and the largest one in East Africa by the size of its population, its economic significance, and the fast expansion of the metropolis in general. The city's skylines are changing constantly with high rises emerging everywhere and its architecture undergoing unprecedented or continuous modification. What makes Addis more different from other African cities is the fact that it is caught in an uninterrupted process of demolition of old buildings, the renovation of not-so-old structures and the construction of new, and most of which are state-of-the-art ones. In the meantime, the city is fast losing its bustling characteristics and assuming a more serene appearance.

As the saying has it, one man's gain may be another man's loss, that is to say in a business where profit and loss are regulated by the market. We can perhaps apply this adage to the present realities of renovation that is taking place in many places in Addis where the construction of new high rises has led to the eviction or disappearance of small businesses, particularly small bookshops that thrived in their shadows. As loss and profit is an inevitable aspect of the market, construction, and demolition are going hand in hand in a city that is engaged in a feverish pace of modernization that does not seem to take the costs into its account.

There are winners and losers in the process of this renovation frenzy. Nowadays urban renewal is less a matter of wholesale destruction of old buildings and structures. Urban renewal is expected to create as many jobs as those lost in the process. According to available information, "Urban renewal is a policy based less on destruction and more on renovation and investment and today it is an integral part of many local governments."

When entire neighborhoods disappear they take away with them not only the bookshops as physical infrastructures. Owners of the shops lose their sources of income and their families are bound to suffer as a result of this.

Addis Ababa's renovation may be a boon to the city's development but it is proving a loss for culture, particularly on books and reading. There were at least three major areas in Addis where bookshops were thriving starting back in the 1990s and 2000s. This includes first the areas behind the National Theatre, and across the road leading to the former commercial printing press.

The second place was located on the other side of the National Theatre and around the old Lion Bar that has given place to the construction site behind Ethiopia Hotel. The National Theatre was thus surrounded by strings of open-air bookshops, near Ras Hotel. There, books are sold on the corridors where, in former times, the area was known for its high-class shops, cafes, and other businesses.

Piassa, and more particularly, the area around St. George church, was known to be a market for books, new and old, that are sold in small shops,

almost the size of bird cages. Most of them have now moved to the adjacent location behind the church on the way to Merkato. Bookshops in areas strategically located at major road junctions, or in crowded places where the book market is relatively more promising. By definition, the best location for a bookstore is "in an area that has high foot traffic, is easily accessible, and has a strong demand for books." It has to be a location that is visible from the street, has ample parking, and is located near other businesses that attract a lot of people.

Modern bookshops are few and located around the posh areas of the capital with high-class neighborhoods whose educated inhabitants have both the culture of book reading and the financial muscles to buy expensive and mostly imported books. 'Bookworld' along Bole Road is such an outlet with a few branches dotting the capital.

The most prominent book distribution outlet is Jafar Books which has many shops located on the ground floors of new buildings. Jafar is not only a major book distributor but also a publisher on the side, although this aspect of the business is little known by the public. Owned and managed by an entrepreneurial young man whose business acumen is well-publicized around the capital, Jafar Books has major distribution outlets in many parts of the capital. As some of the former distributors have either gone out of business, have become full-time publishers, or owners of printing houses, Jafar seems to have chosen his tried and tested specialty as a book dealer or distributor. This is a relatively safer and almost risk-free sector in an industry often hit by bankruptcies and closures of book outlets. By the way, Jafar is also the largest book seller in Ethiopia.

Speaking of bookshops, Addis actually boasts of some 17 bookstores located in various parts of the city. This is not of course a big deal for a city that has more than 5 million inhabitants and serves as the diplomatic capital of Africa with a large foreign community.

Coming back to the Ethiopian capital after a long stay abroad or in the regions is usually replete with many surprises. These days, Addis is changing faster than any time before, so much so that you tend to forget some of the milestones and the buildings that were familiar to you in the old days. Old buildings are being renovated radically and they rather look like new ones. The change is not cosmetic. It is rather radical, that is to say, the building materials, the structures, and the colors are changed, giving the buildings new looks, or the appearance of newness.

The city section that is known as Arat Kilo, the area around Victory Square and the Ministry of Education, and the premises of the Berhanena Selam printing press, have changed expectations. The road is broader and cleaner and the pedestrian alleys are equally cleaner and well-designed. The entire area breathes a sense of newness. This gives you the impression that you are visiting the place for the first time or that you are in a place you did not know before.

July and August in Addis are months of heavy rains. Traditionally, these were also months of cultural activities such as book exhibitions and



other artistic displays. The vacation season provides students and youngsters in general, opportunities for engaging in these activities. Times are changing and these days we do not see anything resembling the activities of the previous years. Maybe the construction shakeup might have disrupted the possibility of organizing cultural activities that are not obviously the top priorities of the city authorities.

As you know, the rainy season in Addis is not the best season for outdoor activities. Heavy rains that started from July and continue well into September prevent people from enjoying outdoor activities and engage in sports such as soccer. Stadiums are closed and recreational activities are scarce. Reading may be the best option but conditions are not suitable for people to read. There are not many public libraries while the internet has made it possible for book lovers to enjoy reading digital versions of the books they like. This has made going to the libraries in the rainy season or enduring the cold something superfluous. The galloping inflation does not give people the rare luxury of using their pocket money to buy books as they used to do in the days long gone.

Cultures, and more particularly books, are part and parcel of our daily diet of the mind. Culture is an important and even decisive aspect of existence as individuals, communities, or

nations. If we look around at the objects that surround us, we realize that we find at least one item of culture standing somewhere although we often overlook its existence. This may be an old bookshelf filled with old and dusty books. It may be an artifact sitting on the table as an object of decoration. It can also be a traditional cultural item that is hanging on the wall as an object of reminiscence or decoration. Anyway, culture is everywhere with us whether we like it or not.

This is what makes culture precious and cultural objects the components of our daily lives. We should therefore look at urban development with a holistic approach and not fall in the pitfall of misconceptions. A building is nothing but a collection of bricks, cement and steel unless it reflects some cultural or traditional aspects of our past history as well as our present. That is why it would be a mistake to do away with a traditional building or memorial item to give way to the construction of a new hotel or recreational centre.

Bookshops not only contains stacks of papers but also our traditions, cultures and dreams that are part of our legacy. That is why we should take care of these items whenever we plan to renovate our environment. As a city without books and bookshops is incomplete, a rainy season is colder and sadder without books not as decorative items but as builders of our minds and souls.

Law & Politics

Bold moves, not plans, required to address global pressing issues

BY DANIEL ALEMAYEHU

Back in 2015, heads of states and government representatives gathered in Ethiopia's capital, Addis Ababa to discuss some global pressing issues and put in place sustainable solutions accordingly. The widely known Addis Ababa Actions Agenda was the result of the 2015 Third International Conference on Financing for Development.

The Addis Ababa Action Agenda aims to end poverty and hunger through achieving the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Agenda has been directed at promoting inclusive economic growth, social inclusion and protecting the environment.

It is stated, in various documents, that bringing the agenda to the ground needs strong political commitment to address the challenge of financing and creating an enabling environment at all levels for sustainable development in the spirit of global partnership and solidarity.

The heads of states and government representatives have also pledged to ensure the implementation of all human rights, the rights to development, gender equality including women's and girls' empowerment. Besides, the agenda aims to promote peaceful and inclusive societies and advance fully towards an equitable global economic system in which no country or person is left behind, enabling decent work and productive livelihoods for all, while preserving the planet for our children and future generations.

But the implementation has been sluggish. Even after around ten years, the execution of the ambitious action agenda has not shown much progress as it was expected. Many even suspect that its effectiveness is not that much possible. Some documents also state that the action agenda has not clearly addressed two prominent issues that featured during the 2015 conference. These issues were the formation of an intergovernmental body on tax which was strongly advocated by civil society organizations, and establishment of some form of international sovereign debt restructuring mechanism to address the debt sustainability challenges.

This was echoed during the first preparatory committee conference on the fourth Financing for Development Conference held in Addis Ababa recently. Ahmed Shide, Ethiopian Minister of Finance, while delivering his opening speech, stated that the implementation of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the United Nations' (UN) Financing for Development is unsatisfactory and caused developing countries significant financing gaps.

"Despite some achievement, developing countries like Ethiopia continue to face significant financing gaps which affect hard-earned progress and are exacerbated by recent global crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic, political conflict and economic instabilities."



The need for a comprehensive holistic transformative approach to achieve the 2030 agenda for Sustainable Development Goals is paramount

As to the minister, the action agenda was believed to pave a way to a new era of global cooperation and ambitious financing development. To achieve the agenda, the need for a comprehensive holistic transformative approach to achieve the 2030 agenda for Sustainable Development Goals is paramount.

Ahmed also voiced that the escalating burden, particularly concerning with many countries which are allocating more resources to death in services rather than investing in basic social service, is undermining financing for development. There is a need to lay out bold actions ensuring the realization of sustainable development goals.

In addition, the minister noted, "We should critically examine the challenges

and implement coordinated reductions to accelerate the implementation of sustainable development goals. We must advocate for comprehensive reform of the international financial architecture including improving global economic governance, enhancing data lab measures and reducing cost of sovereign borrowing."

He also urged that explore and implement innovative finance in solutions to mobilize resources effectively. Mobilizing private investment and strengthening multi-development banks are also important steps. Innovating climate financing mechanisms, such as debt for climate swaps, carbon trading and green bondage should be promoted and extensively used, he mentioned.

He further noted that Ethiopia stands as a testament to resilience and determination striving to overcome challenges and forge a bright future for its people; adding, "We embark on an ambitious transformation aiming to lift millions out of poverty, enhance infrastructure, improve education and ensure healthcare for all."

As to him, significant strides have been made in poverty reduction, education, health, sustainable energy, and gender equality. In response to agenda 2030, the government of Ethiopia is committed to combating climate change. It has made substantial achievements in restoring millions of hectares of degraded landscapes through initiatives such as the Green Legacy initiative which is a champion initiative by the Prime Minister.

By the same token, Amina Mohammed, United Nations Deputy Secretary General, on her part, said that most developing countries are facing high costs of capital. "Many of them cannot invest in the future as they struggle to meet their immediate needs, paying salaries and meeting debt service".

Amina also criticized the financial system as the international financial flow is not based on developing countries' economic outlook which entails that countries remain in bleak while the global economy has been described as in resilience.

There is, as to her, a soft landing in the north

but not in the south. The south is a crash landing. She also stressed the inevitable reform of the financial architecture of the world saying the need for reform was evident in 2015. The series of shocks that have rocked the world since 2020 are a testament to the urgency of delivering on the Addis Ababa commitments, she underlined.

On the other part, Robert Powell, International Monetary Fund (IMF) Special Representative to the United Nations, is optimistic that the upcoming conference in Spain will bring some tangible results.

As to Powell, "The Fourth Finance for Development Conference in Spain next year is an excellent opportunity for the international community to take stock of progress with and lessons learned from countries' efforts to achieve the SDGs, and for all voices to be heard, including civil society. We should discuss openly what has worked and what has been more challenging, so that we can further strengthen our efforts going forward."

He affirmed that the IMF, as an institution, is constantly evolving. The institution, for example, recently focuses on promoting sustainable and inclusive growth while protecting the vulnerable, and the development of strategies regarding its engagement on social spending, better supporting fragile states, mainstream gender issues into our work, and supporting its members' efforts to deal with the challenges of climate change."

"The new Resilience and Sustainability Trust (RST) is intended to support low and vulnerable middle-income countries to address longer term challenges - including climate change and pandemic preparedness - enhancing sustainable growth and prospective balance of payments stability. Good progress on fundraising has been made with about \$47bn in pledges received to date," he concluded.

It was learnt that the first Preparatory committee conference which was held from July 22- 26 here in Addis Ababa will be followed by the Fourth Finance for Development Conference in Spain next year.

Countries should come together to fight tax evasion, illicit financial flow as they undermine domestic resource mobilization

Oliver Schwank

BY ZEKARIAS WOLDEMARIAM

The global community set comprehensive development targets, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to be achieved by 2030. Midway to the goal in 2015, the world's leaders gathered in Addis Ababa to review the progress and set a new pace to keep the right momentum to achieve the goals. The conference in Addis adopted the Addis Ababa Action Agenda to expedite efforts towards realizing the objectives per the schedule. Several reports however indicate that the world is off track from achieving the goals on the set time. With only six years left to the deadline, the world seems never desperate to take more actions to catalyze the measures and realize the goals.

One of the major gaps is financing. So the world has planned to hold the Fourth International Financing for Development Conference in July 2025 in Spain. This week the stakeholders have held their 1st preparatory meeting here in Addis Ababa.

Oliver Schwank is the chief of the policy analyst and development branch in the financing for the Sustainable Development Office with the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA). His office provides substantive support to the discussions that we have here this week in Addis Ababa.

The Ethiopian Herald has discussed with Schwank how the conference would attempt to bridge the financial gap and what hopes are there to achieve the goals. Here is the detail:



My first question would be just about the overall review of SDGs and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.

This is a meeting where the world takes stock of how far we have come since 2015. On the SDGs, we now understand that we are not on track to meet them by 2030. Only 17% of the SDG targets are currently on track to be achieved by 2030. So unless we change course, we will not achieve these global goals. And it's often the financing challenges that are the reason why countries are not able to achieve their goals. Financing gaps are larger now than they were in 2015. We said that many countries have very limited space to invest in these goals. And that's why we are falling behind. So this week here in Addis Ababa, we focused on these financing challenges. And it's critical to address them, if we want to have any chance to achieve the SDGs by 2030, we have to find solutions for the financing. And that's the purpose of the discussions this week.

It is well known that developing countries lag behind the developed ones in terms of economy, finance, human resources, technology ...etc. How would it be possible to plan for such heterogeneous categories to pass through the same path and achieve the same goal? What were the considerations made during the planning of the goals?

The first thing I would say is that in 2015, when this Addis Ababa action agenda was agreed, that was a historic breakthrough.

This agenda is still sound and valid. If you listened to the discussions here, most countries and experts agree that the framework we have is still the right one. But there are many commitments in there that we haven't met. So we have good agreements, but we haven't implemented them. And then the second thing is that since 2015, the world has changed. And there are, of course, some positive developments. But overall, we are in a much more difficult environment now than we were in 2015. We had a pandemic, we have conflict, and we have now inflation and very high interest rates. So we have a lot of new challenges that have set us back and the countries are struggling with. So I would say what we achieved in 2015 is still valid, but we have to do better in implementation. And we have to address some of these new challenges.

What were those unexpected challenges?

I think we knew in 2015 that climate change would trigger a major crisis down the line. Now, nine years later, it's not just an expectation, we see it every week. You see countries are dramatically affected by this. There were unexpected things like the pandemic (COVID-19), and conflict.

How much is Africa involved and contributing to the planning and execution of the SDGs?

I actually think it's playing a very prominent role and African countries have been leaders on some of these issues, especially on the financing questions. Ethiopia played a leading role in 2015. It hosted the

conference, it helped shape this agenda. And, ever since, African countries have been very vocal about the need to take action on the financing questions. I can give you several examples. One of the topics that come up a lot in the discussions today is the need to allow countries to mobilize more resources at home; tax revenues. And that also means we have to take action internationally. Sometimes, this revenue mobilization is made difficult because of the rules we have internationally. And African countries have stressed time and again, that we need to ensure that this financing that's mobilized doesn't immediately leave the country again, through illicit outflows. So they have been very vocal and real leaders in putting these issues, tax cooperation, and the fight against illicit flows on the agenda. And, that's why we discussed them today. And that's why there is also action being taken. But these are just two examples. The African countries have been real leaders in this area. African leaders have been incredibly vocal on the need to take action on climate and also to give countries access to the financial resources that they can.

About raising domestic resource mobilization how do you think African countries are advancing in this regard?

Domestic resource mobilization is a critical source of finance; of course, it's the primary source of, spending and investment on sustainable development goals and objectives. In most countries, it's by far the largest resource available. And it's also really important. There's a

social compact that countries have with the citizens, and accountability that comes by raising resources from your citizens, that also helps ensure that citizens then hold the government to account. African countries have worked very hard to increase these domestic resources.

Part of the challenge is that the world has been changing quite dramatically. And we have brought down, for example, tariffs and trade taxes so that countries can integrate fully into the world economy. Countries have tried to attract the investment that they desperately need. And so sometimes they do that by, giving investors tax incentives. And, then it has become easier, partly because of technology, partly because we have such an internationalized economy, for some of these actors to avoid their responsibilities, and to avoid paying their taxes. All of these pressures have made it very difficult to raise revenues domestically, despite the ambition of countries to do so. And that's what a discussion like the one we have here can help. There's a lot that countries can do by themselves, but they can't do it all. So we need to come together as a community because addressing illicit flows, addressing, the ability of corporations to shift their incomes and avoid paying taxes can only be addressed by countries coming together, and that's what these discussions here at the UN are about.

When you say countries coming together does it mean forming a free trade area like AfCFTA?

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Countries should come together to fight...

continued from page 8

That can be part of it, but also thinking about the rules and agreements they have around, for example, how to allocate taxing rights. If you have a company that's based in one country operates in the second, maybe has a headquarters in the third. It's even overseas. Then it's too easy at the moment for these actors, with different accounting measures to avoid the responsibility to contribute their fair share in the countries where they operate in. So then the host countries where these corporate investors operate are left empty-handed; they do not get their fair share of revenue. And, that's not something a country can address on its own. There needs to be a dialogue and agreement between these different countries to ensure that it's not so easy to avoid these responsibilities for paying taxes. They can avoid paying a fair share of taxes because they can book their profits in one jurisdiction. And, the countries that may need the resources, most are left empty-handed.

And we're missing illicit financial flow. Is it all sides of a continent or just visiting the continent itself?

Both are true. But if you look at the data, which is not easy to collect, because these are illicit activities, it can be both within the continent and beyond. There is a lot of evidence that a lot of these resources are flowing out of the continent. So they are leaving Africa, and then are not available for investment in Africa's prosperity.

When we say illicit financial flow, does it refer to the ones that are not accounted or registered through the legal financial flow?

Exactly! That can be on the tax side, it can be tax evasion, and it can be proceeds of corruption that are then transferred outside the country. But what unites it is that these are resources that should be available to invest at home. But then, leave the countries or leave the continent. And then that's partly why you don't have enough resources here in Africa to invest.

And is there any evidence to what extent this is affecting these illicit financial flows, problems in taxation, like tax evasion, or even lower rates of taxation, or these kinds of things, to what extent they're affecting domestic resource mobilization?

There is evidence. It's very understandable why this happens. Countries are desperate to attract investment from overseas. And one way to do this is to promise some relief on the tax burden. And this is something that investors often look for. But if you do that in core sectors of the economy, then it undermines the tax base of the country. So there's a lot of evidence that these tax breaks, tax incentives can reach a level where they undermine a country's ability to mobilize enough resources domestically. And there's also evidence for the illicit outflows. These flows are in the billions of dollars.

So what do you think can African countries or regional blocs, like the African Union, do in this regard?

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There are many things countries can do at home; strengthen tax administrations, good governance, and more transparency

One thing they are doing right now is that they are advocating for international agreements that would help address these challenges. So as I said, it's very difficult for any one country to address this alone. Of course, there are many things countries can do at home; strengthen tax administrations, good governance, and more transparency, all of this helps; but it's not going to be enough. So there is a need to have better international agreements and rules that make sure that, it's not the actions of other countries that undermine these efforts.

African countries have brought these discussions to the UN. And just next week there'll be negotiations in New York at the United Nations to agree on Terms of Reference for a new international framework convention on tax cooperation. This discussion is happening only because of the leadership of the African group. So they have brought this issue to the international community. And it's yielding results. These kinds of international agreements take time to be finalized, and then for the impact to be felt on the ground. But they are a real, fundamental change in the system and the solution in the long term. So African countries, as I said earlier, have been real leaders on this.

So regarding the SDGs integration is the flagship project of the African Union Agenda 2063. To what extent is being integrated and implemented? And how do you see daily effectiveness?

These agendas are well aligned, the 2030 agenda and agenda 2063. They have very different time horizons, of course. For the SDGs, we have five years left here, and then we will need to think about what's the next step. Where do we go next? Whereas the agenda 2063 is a long-term vision for the development of the continent. It's important that you have a global agreement, a global vision, the 2030 agenda. But of course, Africa has its priorities and its needs. Both agendas have important roles to play.

And when we say one thing raised along with this is accelerating of efforts. So what do we mean by that? And what it is, do we have to focus on in this acceleration, especially regarding?

The most important thing at this point is to accelerate investment: investment in people, investment in infrastructure, and investment in climate action. The only way to meet the SDGs within the next six years, which is the time we have left, is to really, significantly scale up these investments. And that's true globally. But it's especially true in Africa. To do this, we need to do a few things. First, we need to help countries. Many countries suffer from very high debt burdens right now. If you have high debt, and you dedicate 20% to 30% of your tax revenues just to service the debt, you're not going to be able to make these investments. Many countries are in distress. They're cut off from markets because they are defaulting. And we don't have good ways to help them resolve this crisis quickly. These countries will not be able to invest. So the first big priority is to address the debt challenges. And maybe I'll mention one more. Second, one of the most effective tools we have to quickly increase financing for these investments is the development banks: the World Bank, and the Regional African Development Banks. But also we have other development banks that can help do this, and that's why there's a lot of focus on making sure that these banks can quickly scale up the financing they provide. And that's also a big priority in our discussions. How do we make sure that these public Development Banks can scale up, financing quickly and affordably so countries can invest?

So we see acceleration. To what extent are you hopeful that we can catch up?

I think there are different ways to look at this. A lot is happening, right? If you compare where these institutions are now, compared to five years ago, there have been a lot of positive steps. On the debt front, we now have the common framework, which for the first time brings together all the official creditors, including China to coordinate efforts. On the development banks, they've already taken quite a few steps to scale up their lending. With the measures they've taken so far they will increase lending by almost half a trillion dollars over the next decade. So it's important to acknowledge the efforts that have been made. But when you compare it to the needs, it's still not enough. That's the reality. So we need to continue to work on doing more.

What's your expectation out of this

conference?

We hope that the conference can help do precisely that it can help raise the ambition on these issues and help do even more than we've already done. So when you think about the debt, we have to, we have to find a way to more systematically help countries.

I mentioned the progress we've made. Still, the support that's given to countries is case by case, it takes a long time, Ethiopia is a good example. It takes a long time to resolve this issue. So we need to find a way to provide the support more systematically, that might mean we need some kind of initiative. So that when countries are in this situation, it doesn't take years To address it. To resolve it, we need to bring that timeline down. So, hopefully, the conference can agree to some package or some initiative that can help not just one or two countries at a time, very slowly, but have many countries much more quickly to address these challenges. And second, we talked about the development bank, so how do we find ways that they can do even more? Right now they are saying 400 to 500 billion over a decade, that's 30 to 40 billion, maybe \$50 billion more a year. How do we get to the next 50 or 100 billion a year? Because the financing gaps are larger, they are larger than that. So, it is very likely that we need to not just help them optimize how they use their resources, which is what they're focused on right now. But to give them more resources, so they need to increase their capital basis. So we need to have a discussion around, capital increases for these public development banks. And the conversations are starting, this is not unrealistic, the conference can hopefully create the political momentum to deliver this, and we will have many heads of state who will be convening. They will be very aware, of the urgency. They understand that this is a real urgent need of humanity. And so maybe they can, together create the political will to say, that means we also need to put money on the table, for example, by giving a generous capital increase to the World Bank to the African Development Bank, and then these institutions can scale up their support.

So I just finished with my questions, maybe if you have more points that you'd like to raise to us then you give us a chance.

One thing I would say is that the discussions this week, have been encouraging. We had very high-level participation, more than 40 ministers from 100 countries that can be together and also when you listen to them, a real shared sense of urgency and a willingness to talk about very concrete ideas. So countries didn't just come here, they came, with ideas and proposals. So it's a very encouraging start to this process. And so I'm more optimistic today than I was a week ago that we can deliver some of the things next year for the main further conference.

Thank you very much for your valuable comments.

Thank you. I am glad, too!

Society

Embracing tech talent, gaining competitive edge

BY MENGISTEAB TESHOME

According to the 2023 World Skilled Workforce Data, in today's world where technology has become an integral part of our daily lives influencing each of our activities and the world has become digitalized to an unparalleled degree, the demand for skilled and competent professionals in coding and software development is growing in unprecedented levels, making it one of the most sought after professions.

The report confirms that as many as 375 million workers across the globe, that is 14 percent of the entire world's workforce, may need to switch occupational categories by 2030 as the rising tide of digitization, automation, and AI disrupts many of the jobs and tasks carried out today.

As coding is becoming the language that powers the digital revolution, enabling the creation of innovative applications, efficient processes, and transformative solutions, global countries are competing to apply it.

Experts in information technology also advise that, in an era of rapid technological advancement, the importance of a skilled and versatile workforce is a matter that cannot be left unnoticed. At the forefront of this transformation, the crucial role of coding and digital literacy becomes clearer.

In cognizant of this and the looming burden, countries are engaged in building a workforce armed with coding and programming skills because capacitating the human capital with the required skills is critical not only to enhance employability but also drive to technological advancement and increase the competitiveness of a nation. In turn, the effort is bearing fruit in ensuring rapid technological advancement.

Ethiopia is also striving to promote the IT field and build the capacity of its young people in coding and software development to go along with the ever-changing technological world and gain the rewarding advantages it yields.

To this end, by devising the National Digital Ethiopia 2025 strategy, which paves the way to leveraging digital technologies and be successful in the global digital economy, it is undertaking numerous activities.

What is more, it has also established an academy- the Ethiopian Academy of Sciences- targeting to foster scientific culture and innovation and advance the knowledge of the sciences, arts, and indigenous knowledge among the young people.

As documents indicate, the primary aim of the Academy is to promote scientific culture in Ethiopia by nurturing interest and curiosity in science. It also has an aspiration to see Ethiopia at the forefront of science and technology by producing a scientifically and technologically literate and informed citizenry.

In turn, though more works are ahead, the inspiring beginnings are witnessed. Just



to mention but a few, more and more young people are attracted to the area and even promising innovation works are produced by students. Besides, performing financial transactions supported by various digital electronic payment systems has become the most accustomed trend these days in Ethiopia.

Recently, an initiative - the 5 Million Ethiopian Coders Initiative, that aims to provide basic digital literacy training to 5 million Ethiopian youth by 2026, was launched by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD). The initiative is said to bridge the digital skills gap in the country.

Following the initiative *The Ethiopian Herald* held an exclusive interview with STEM SYNERGY Ethiopia Project Manager Abiyot Lakew to have his insight regarding the program bringing about Ethiopian youth.

According to him, the 5 Million Coders Initiative presents a golden opportunity for Ethiopian youth to capitalize on the surging demand for coding and programming expertise. By embracing this initiative, young Ethiopians can acquire sought-after skills, become competitive in the global job market, and even venture into entrepreneurship by developing their innovative digital solution skills.

The impact of this initiative can be transformative for Ethiopia's nation-building efforts. A skilled coding workforce can drive the development of cutting-edge digital infrastructure, facilitate the automation of various industries, and foster the creation of homegrown technology startups. This, in turn, can lead to increased economic diversification, job creation, and overall societal progress.

According to him, in the 21st century, digital skills have become an essential element for personal and professional success. Thus, it is high time to invest in coding and programming education in Ethiopia.



It could help in equipping youth with the necessary digital competencies to thrive in the global digital economy. This will help enhance the country's competitiveness; and position it as a hub for technology and innovation.

The initiative in Ethiopia, in partnership with the UAE government, is a visionary endeavor that recognizes the pivotal role of a coding-skilled in driving national development. By empowering the youth with these essential digital skills, Ethiopia is positioning itself to embrace the digital revolution and transform its economy and society. As the Ethiopian youth seize this opportunity, the nation as a whole can look forward to a future where technology and innovation are the cornerstones of sustainable progress and prosperity.

There is a huge task to be done in primary and secondary as well as higher education in taming the students with Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) education. "We have been working throughout Ethiopia since 2016 and established 22 STEM centers and 71 laboratories that could help students learn coding and computer programming. STEM Synergy Ethiopia provides education for students coming from public and private schools, focusing on empowering youths and women through practical education, sustainable local solutions, and entrepreneurship. We are engaged in working at the grassroots."

Responding to the government's call for coding initiative, he said that it is groundbreaking news and a great opportunity for citizens because it lets them enjoy outsourced job opportunities and garner skills. "We would like to commend the bold step taken in launching the 5 Million Coders Initiative in partnership with the government of the United Arab Emirates."

The training could provide students with comprehensive training and education in various programming languages, algorithms, and software engineering principles. By equipping the Ethiopian youth with these in-demand skills, the initiative can create a pool of talented individuals who can contribute to the country's ongoing digitalization efforts, he opined.

The 5 Million Ethiopian Coders Initiative, launched recently by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) at the Science Museum, aims to bridge the digital skills gap in the country.

The project is designed to benefit five million Ethiopian citizens with digital technology training. The program aims to equip five million Ethiopian youth with foundational digital skills in areas such as Web Programming, Android Development, Data Science, and Artificial Intelligence, according to the Office of the Prime Minister.

International

In climate fight, focus on women and girls

BY STAFF REPORTER

Much has been said about the impacts of the climate crisis, from food and water shortages to economic disruption. From where I sit, though, the world is not paying nearly enough attention to the difficult situations that the crisis is forcing on women and girls each day.

The Lunia Centre for Youths, which I founded in Zimbabwe in 2022 to promote climate justice, gender equality, and equitable health services for all, is addressing the rising threat of climate change by supporting community resilience in promoting the health and rights of young people.

Across Zimbabwe and many other countries, teenage girls and young women should be able to focus on their studies, plan for their futures, and choose whether or when to have children.

Instead, they are often robbed of those rights and opportunities as climate change worsens existing inequities. Women bear the brunt of fetching water for their families as the wells run dry, face a heightened risk of sexual violence when they sleep, bathe, or dress in emergency shelters, and all too often get married, give birth, and are forced to drop out of school due to increased economic pressure on their parents. Rising temperatures and extreme weather also disrupt agriculture, the main economic driver in Zimbabwe, destroying crops and eroding the power and sense of dignity that women and girls gain from working in the sector, as well as contributing to food insecurity and malnutrition.

It does not need to be this way. By focusing on expanding access to sexual and reproductive health services, empowering young people with knowledge, and changing attitudes, we have demonstrated that local efforts can produce grassroots change.

Africa's Climate Emergency

Droughts, floods, and other extreme weather events disrupt food production, damage water supplies, and cause breakdowns in infrastructure. It is a global challenge, but it is especially acute in Africa, where rates of maternal mortality and unmet family planning needs are already high, just as levels of gender-based violence and child marriage are increasing. Of all regions, sub-Saharan Africa is projected to have the largest proportion of the 132 million people who could be pushed into extreme poverty by 2030 due to climate change.

The impacts of climate change across the continent are devastating. In Uganda, research shows that during prolonged droughts women and girls are forced to make more frequent and longer journeys in search of food and water, which makes them vulnerable to assault, and some are manipulated into exchanging sex for goods they need. In Mozambique, a cyclone in 2021 hampered access to contraception, leaving more than 20,000 women vulnerable to unintended pregnancies. In countries such as Ethiopia and Malawi, floods, heat waves, and other shocks drive families deeper into poverty, increasing rates of child marriage.



My country, too, is seeing the fallout. Zimbabwe, which has faced an ongoing cholera outbreak linked to climate change, was forced to declare a state of emergency in April due to severe drought and to appeal for billions of dollars in humanitarian assistance. Fueled by the El Niño weather pattern, the crisis is affecting most other countries in southern Africa, prompting the declaration of similar emergencies in Malawi and Zambia.

The ripple effect of climate change on women and girls cannot be underestimated. Irregular rainfall will affect food production in places where irrigation systems are lacking, including rain-fed agriculture—and maize—which is the mainstay of every meal. The pressures for child marriage are also known to increase in times of scarcity and following extreme weather events as families exchange their girls in a desperate bid to survive. Moreover, climate events can severely alter the physical and mental well-being of teenage girls at a time when they are due to start having periods.

Young girls, meanwhile, face a growing risk of malnutrition that could stunt their development as food supplies become scarce and water shortages raise the danger that households will turn to unsafe water sources, increasing the spread of cholera and other diseases. Even on weighing days, when community health-care workers come to check on the progress of young children, clean water is not available. Climate change adds to existing pressure on health-care facilities, which in some cases are struggling to cope as nurses, midwives, and doctors leave the country for opportunities abroad.

The Lunia Centre

The Lunia Centre was named for my mother, who has devoted her life to helping others. As a community health worker, she delivered medical supplies, contraceptives, and trusted advice to the community, filling a much-needed gap for the people in my village. Watching her take care of our neighbors

and providing a lifeline that changed the trajectory of many of their lives led me to focus on sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), a crucial need in my country, which has high rates of sexually transmitted infections and teenage pregnancies.

Today, the Lunia Centre, supported by the Global Financing Facility for Women, Children and Adolescents (GFF), advocates for resilient infrastructure such as solar-powered water pumps and irrigation systems in a bid to address the challenge of water scarcity and help pregnant women, some of whom are forced to seek out fresh water to wash after giving birth. We also focus on nutrition, encouraging women and children to take advantage of free vitamin supplements. That is a crucial intervention given that the climate crisis leads to failed crops, leaving populations with less to eat and threatening nutrition for women and children.

Zimbabwe, like many countries in the region, is young. Almost two-thirds of our people are younger than 25. It could be easy to feel despair, but when I see young people empowered to speak up for themselves, their communities, and their futures, I am filled with optimism.

I sit on a national platform for health where I share evidence and stories of what women and children are experiencing. In the past few months, the Lunia Centre has trained some 400 young people who are now sexual and reproductive health advocates in their communities. They are providing educational materials on safe sex practices, telling their peers about services in state- and NGO-supported health centers, and engaging with community leaders to advocate for better services. Together we are monitoring investments made and checking they are reaching those who need them most.

A Call for Action

Funding now needs to meet the growing needs of women and girls.

In many parts of the developing world,

the health of women and girls has been underfunded for far too long, and efforts to address the gaps are falling short. This was already the case but is now compounded by the impacts of climate change that further threaten their rights and opportunities.

More than 60 countries are off track in meeting maternal, newborn, and stillborn mortality reduction targets. The World Bank estimates that about 40 governments will spend less on health between now and 2027 than they did prior to the COVID pandemic.

The particular problems facing women and girls in this crisis are often overlooked. Of the 119 countries that have published national climate plans, only 38 integrate SRHR or gender-based violence—and many of those only refer to certain aspects of these topics, such as maternal and newborn care.

In the meantime, the situation is deteriorating.

The task is daunting—but I believe that the global community can help turn things around with the right level of resources, directed where they are needed most. Already, Zimbabwe is seeking to introduce new climate mitigation and adaptation measures even as it also takes steps to protect women. The country is expanding a voucher program to provide free maternal health services in the poorest communities, supported by the World Bank and the GFF.

When global leaders meet to discuss climate change, I hope they will put themselves in the shoes of a teenage girl in Zimbabwe who makes the potentially hazardous journey to find water, is forced to leave school because of how long that now takes, or is pushed into sex work to support their family. I urge them to keep those young women at the front of their minds.

This is a crisis that will grow worse without action. Leaders can make a choice to invest in the health and rights of women and girls to deliver enormous social and economic gains.

Source: www.thinkglobalhealth.org

Verbatim and Caption

Five Million Coders Initiative aims bridging digital skills gap: PM Abiy

The 5 Million Ethiopian Coders Initiative we launch today is a great opportunity to bridge the digital skills gap. The initiative is part of the national Digital Ethiopia 2025 strategy. The project is designed to benefit five million citizens with digital technology training. By 2026, the program aims to equip five million Ethiopian youth with foundational digital skills in Web Programming, Android Development, Data Science, and Artificial Intelligence. My greatest gratitude goes to the government of the United Arab Emirates for the partnership in this large scale capacity-building project.

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) said while launching Five Million Ethiopian Coders Initiative this week



Efforts underway to ensure women participation in national dialogue: Ergoge

Efforts are being carried out to ensure women's meaningful participation in nation state building and national dialogue processes. The National Dialogue which aims resolving the fundamental problems of Ethiopia has reached its pivotal stage. The Ministry of Women and Social Affairs has facilitated various forums in coordination with stakeholders to engage women in meaningful and wider participation on issues of nation building efforts and national dialogue processes.

Ergoge Tesfaye (PhD), Minister of Women and Social Affairs



Reforming international financial institutions key to achieve SDGs: Ethiopia's Representative to UN

Reforming International Financial Institutions is critical for developing countries to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Inclusive, responsive, and accessible multilateral financial institutions is necessary to give developing countries a greater voice in decision-making. The SDGs are part of political commitment by the global community back then in 2015. Unless we change certain things in terms of finance, we are definitely going to miss the SDGs targets.

Ambassador Tesfaye Yilma, Ethiopia's Permanent Representative to the United Nations

Progress in SDG financing, reform in Global Financial system crucial: Ahmed Shide

Reinforcing transformative financial frameworks is crucial to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and undertaking comprehensive reform in the global financing system. All stakeholders should undertake comprehensive reform of the global financing system. Promoting innovative financing mechanisms such as Public Private Partnership can improve finance mobilization for successful realization of SDGs.

Ahmed Shide, Minister, Ministry of Finance



Debt relief initiative crucial at multilateral, bilateral frameworks: FM Taye

Debt relief initiative should be scaled up both at multilateral and bilateral frameworks to solve unsustainable debt burden as well as unlock investment to Sustainable development Goals (SDGs). The global financial architecture must be reformed to be more inclusive and equitable. Developed countries should advocate for and support reforms in international financial institutions to ensure that their funds better address the needs of developing countries.

Ambassador Taye Atske Selassie, Ethiopian Foreign Minister

