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## Ethiopia vows to restore 22 mln ha of land by 2030

BY TEWORDOS KASSA

ADDIS ABABA- Ethiopia is ramping up its efforts to combat climate change and contribute to the green economy on a global scale, according to the Ethiopian Forestry Development agency.

The agency's commitment is said to reflect the country's pledge to restore 22 million hectares of degraded land by 2030.

"The Green Legacy Initiative exemplifies Ethiopia's dedication to addressing climate change," remarked Aberu Tana, Executive Director of Green Legacy and Artificial Forest at the Ethiopian

See Ethiopia vows .. page 3



Photo: Dange Abera

## PM announces Ethiopia's official bid to host AFCON 2029

### • Amokachi, Kanu appointed as bid ambassadors

BY YESUF ENDRIS

ADDIS ABABA - Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) announced that Ethiopia has officially submitted a request to the

Confederation of African Football (CAF) to host the African Cup of Nations (AFCON) in 2029.

The Prime Minister assured that all necessary infrastructure will be constructed

and completed in a timely manner if Ethiopia wins the bid.

During a friendly match with former African soccer stars, Premier Abiy highlighted the complex

See PM announces .. page 3



Ergoge Tesfaye (PhD)

## MoSA seeks collaboration to empower youth

BY MESRET BEHAILU

ADDIS ABABA-The Ministry of Women and Social Affairs (MoSA) is calling for a united effort from the government, private sector, and young people themselves to

See MoSA seeks .. page 3

## Economists highlight strategies to maximize SEZ benefits

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

ADDIS ABABA - Economic experts have stressed the importance of creating a favorable business environment to effectively exploit the benefits of Special Economic Zones (SEZs).

Yeneges Alemu (PhD), an economist, told the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that SEZs serve as a tool for fostering sustainable economic growth in developing countries. The SEZs are also instrumental in promoting sustainable development, generating employment, and attracting foreign direct investment (FDI).

"SEZs not only enable manufacturing industries to easily access necessary inputs but also create an attractive business environment that draws in foreign investments," Yeneges stated. "This strategy



has been effectively used by countries like China and South American nations to enhance their economies through various investor incentives."

Despite their positive outcomes, the economist pointed out that the Ethiopian government needs to address issues related

See Economists .. page 3

# News



Workesmu Mamo

## Nat'l community health insurance satisfaction reaches 68 percent

BY STAFF REPORTER

**ADDIS ABABA** - Customer satisfaction with the community-wide health insurance provided under the national health insurance service has reached 68 percent, according to a recent study.

The study, which assessed the satisfaction, understanding, and attitudes of community health insurance customers, was presented yesterday in Adama town.

The House of People's Representatives Health, Social and Sports Affairs Standing Committee Chairperson Workesmu Mamo highlighted that this research will help strengthen monitoring and control efforts within the health insurance service. "The research provides a scientific basis to evaluate user satisfaction rather than relying on random observations. This will enhance our monitoring and control work"

Workesmu further noted that measures such as creating separate service windows for customers to avoid long waits have positively impacted satisfaction. However, she stressed that improvements are needed in the procurement of medicines to achieve better overall satisfaction.

According to her, the health insurance service was initially launched on a pilot basis in select districts to ensure citizens receive treatment despite potential barriers. The successful pilot led to broader implementation.

While the current service coverage is commendable, more efforts are needed to boost customer satisfaction, particularly in addressing drug supply issues, which remain a significant bottleneck in service delivery.

Adamu Bherteka, Executive Director of Fund Risk and Investment for the service, presented the study's findings, indicating that 12 million households have benefited from the scheme, serving a total of 56 million citizens. The study, conducted in eight states, revealed that national user satisfaction with the system stands at 68 percent.

The Ethiopian Health Insurance Service, which is a part of the Community Health Insurance System, which is designed to help citizens contribute as much as they can and be treated according to their illness, and which is designed to provide health coverage set by the World Health Organization, started its trial implementation in three districts in 2020.

Data shows that in the 2024 fiscal year, the service covered 1052 districts and benefited more than 54 million citizens.

## Researchers hopeful for fertilizer local production's economic gains

BY MESERET BEHALU

**ADDIS ABABA**- Agricultural researchers emphasize the importance of utilizing local resources to produce fertilizers domestically, aiming to achieve economic advantages and mitigate foreign exchange issues. Optimistic

Biru Yitaferu (PhD), a soil researcher at the Ethiopian Institute of Agriculture, told the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that the government is focused on local fertilizer production to save over one billion USD annually spent on imports. Urea and DAP fertilizers are in high demand in Ethiopia, and the country has the necessary inputs to produce them locally.

The researcher further highlighted that fertilizer production requires substantial raw materials and high electrical energy. Ethiopia is making strides in generating sufficient energy to support local fertilizer production. The discovery of gas and coal in Somali and South Western Ethiopia State provides crucial inputs for Urea fertilizer production, enabling Ethiopia to produce 65 to 70 percent of its Urea fertilizer needs domestically.

"Global market fluctuations often impact us negatively, with inflation making us



vulnerable. For instance, the war between Russia and Ukraine has caused a fourfold increase in fertilizer prices."

The Moroccan government had initiated a fertilizer production project in Dire Dawa, which has faced delays due to infrastructure-related challenges. Addressing these infrastructural issues and engaging the private sector is crucial for progress, he suggested.

Currently, Ethiopia has 20 million hectares of cultivable land and requires 60 million quintals of fertilizer. However, the country has only been able to procure 17 million tons

of fertilizer so far,

Supporting the above perspective, Awoke Muluaem (PhD), the Natural Resources and Climate Program Director at the Ethiopian Agricultural Transformation Institute, noted that while fertilizers boost crop production, their overuse can lead to soil acidification and nutrient depletion.

The researcher emphasized that Ethiopia's crop production heavily relies on fertilizers, and the country has faced shortages. "Producing fertilizers locally would play a pivotal role in addressing these challenges and alleviating the foreign exchange shortage."

## Roboticist discusses AI's pros, cons

BY STAFF REPORTER

**ADDIS ABABA** – Ethiopia needs to raise awareness about Artificial Intelligence (AI) to harness its productive potential and mitigate its drawbacks, a robot creator emphasized.

Tomas Workneh, an ICT student at Misrak Poly Technique College, showcased an AI robot named Lucy at the 14th City-wide Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Week. The robot, which took Tomas a year to build, can verbally communicate in Amharic and English, respond to questions, alert in case of accidents, and detect heritage sites and individuals. Additionally, Lucy monitors household appliances, provides weather updates, and can stop a car if the driver falls asleep.

Tomas was motivated to create the robot to position Ethiopia among the early adopters of the AI revolution. He stressed the importance of promoting innovation to allow the country to benefit from technology. "Exploring AI's advantages in agriculture, health, education, and governance can significantly boost productivity," he added.

AI devices enable farmers to perform tasks like sowing and mowing based on real-time information about soil moisture, temperature, humidity, and other environmental conditions. Tomas believes that many youths with technological know-how are not translating their knowledge into tangible results. He urged young people to practice



their skills using opportunities provided by TVET institutions, aspiring to become role models for future generations and help Ethiopia benefit from technology.

AI supports countries in enhancing productivity by undertaking challenging and hazardous tasks with robots. The technology improves public security by facilitating living environments in cities, residential areas, and smoothing traffic flows. AI is also crucial for providing efficient public services, such as improved public transport and reduced travel times.

Despite concerns about AI's negative

impacts on employment and privacy, Tomas emphasized the technology's significant benefits in improving people's lives. AI has been playing an increasingly crucial role in recent years, enabling computers and machines to perform tasks similar to or even better than humans through machine learning and deep learning.

In conclusion, Tomas highlighted the need for Ethiopia to focus on raising awareness and promoting the advantages of AI to achieve productive outcomes and minimize its potential drawbacks.

# News



## EASF hails Ethiopia's contribution to regional peace

**ADDIS ABABA-** Eastern Africa Standby Force (EASF) commended Ethiopia for its indispensable role in the efforts to maintaining peace and stability in the region, as a key member of the force.

A delegation from the Eastern Africa Standby Force office in Nairobi, Kenya, arrived in Ethiopia to oversee the preparedness of Ethiopia's motorized battalion contributed to the force.

The delegation is currently conducting a pre-deployment verification and assessment forum in Bishoftu town of Oromia region today.

Director of the Eastern Africa Standby Force, Brigadier General Paul Kahuria Njema along with Lieutenant General Alemshet Degife, Military Advisor to the Chief of Staff of the Ethiopian National Defense Force, were present at the event attended by leaders, military officers of the standby force, and officials from the African Union.

On the occasion, the Director highlighted Ethiopia's significant contribution in terms of providing a professional and qualified army to the Eastern Africa Standby Force. He also praised Ethiopia for its global contributions in this regard.

He also noted Ethiopia's extensive experience in fostering peace and stability across East Africa, expressing gratitude for Ethiopia's significant contributions to all missions it has been engaged thus far.

Brigadier General Njema further emphasized the imperative for regional countries to strengthen cooperation and work diligently

towards achieving lasting peace and stability.

Lieutenant General Alemshet Degife, Military Advisor to the Chief of Staff of the Ethiopian National Defense Force, reiterated Ethiopia's longstanding and pivotal role in promoting peace and security cooperation throughout Africa and the region.

Alemshet emphasized that Ethiopia, as a founding member of the standby force, is not only a pioneer in generating ideas but remains actively engaged as a leader in practical implementation.

He highlighted Ethiopia's significant allocation of resources towards promoting peace in the region.

The Lieutenant General underscored Ethiopia's commitment and readiness to enhance the capacity of the standby force, ensuring comprehensive preparedness and effective mission execution.

The advisor also emphasized the critical role of the standby force in fostering peace and stability to strengthen cooperation among countries in the region across various sectors, while also highlighting the continuous readiness of the Ethiopian Motorized Battalion.

He affirmed the force's unwavering commitment to enhancing its indispensable role in securing peace and prosperity for a brighter future in the region.

During their stay in Ethiopia, the Standby Force envoy will visit the Eastern Africa Standby Force headquarters in Ethiopia to assess the battalion's readiness and operational status, ENA reported.

## PM announces...

preparations required to host AFCON and emphasized Ethiopia's intensified efforts to realize this goal.

"Ethiopia has requested to host AFCON 2029. The qualifications to win this bid are complex. We have appointed former Nigerian soccer stars Daniel Amokachi and Nwankwo Kanu as ambassadors to support our bid. Their visit and the visits of their colleagues are crucial in promoting Ethiopia's potential."

He also mentioned earlier discussions with CAF President, stating, "If we achieve this endeavor, the public will be informed, and preparatory works such as hotels and stadiums will be accomplished."

PM Abiy underscored the government's commitment to building sports infrastructure, noting that Ethiopia is a football-loving nation with a youthful population. "The arrival of these football stars will undoubtedly stimulate Ethiopian football and shape the perception of African football about Ethiopia."

Speaking to the Ethiopian Broadcasting

Corporation, former Nigerian player Taribo West praised Prime Minister Abiy's vision for Ethiopian football, noting that his contributions would benefit not only Ethiopia but all Africans. "All the projects we have seen during our visit illustrate the Prime Minister's positive vision for Ethiopia. I think Africans and the Diaspora should visit Ethiopia."

Another former Nigerian star, Daniel Amokachi found Ethiopian hospitality very attractive. He added that the Prime Minister's efforts could serve as a lesson to many African leaders.

Last Friday, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and Deputy Prime Minister Temesgen Tiruneh met with former African footballers known for playing in the English Premier League and various European clubs, famous artists from the continent, public figures, and renowned designers who came to Ethiopia to participate in the Shenen Africa Festival, *The Ethiopian Herald* learned.

## MoSA seeks...

ensure all youths benefit.

This message came during a forum titled "Cluster 10 One Issue" co-organized by MoSA and the Ethiopian Entrepreneurial Youth Association.

MoSA Minister Ergoge Tesfaye (PhD) highlighted the importance of youth empowerment and universal benefit for national development. She stressed the need for collaboration between the government, private sector, and youths to create a favorable environment.

The Minister emphasized developing youths' problem-solving and opportunity-creation skills. "It's not just the government's responsibility," she said. "The private sector and civil society organizations must also play their part."

Ergoge urged young people to organize and collaborate instead of working independently. She acknowledged various government initiatives to support youths and mentioned improvements underway for the national youth policy. The revised policy is expected to be approved and

implemented next year.

Recognizing the youth's potential for change and development, Tesfaye highlighted MoSA's efforts to create opportunities for voluntary work and civic service. "Building a supportive environment for youths requires coordinated efforts from all stakeholders," she concluded.

Samia Abdulkadir, President of the Ethiopian Entrepreneurial Youth Association, explained their mission to open doors for youths with the government and other partners. The association has fostered cooperation with numerous governmental and non-governmental institutions.

"Uniting allows our voices to be heard," said Samia. "Continuous discussions are key to influencing policy changes that address challenges hindering youth work and opportunities."

The forum concluded with MoSA and the Ethiopian Entrepreneurs Association signing a collaborative agreement.

## Ethiopia vows...

Forest Development Agency, in an interview with EBC Cyber. "The program not only fosters community engagement but also enhances Ethiopia's image on the international stage."

Aberu highlighted that past initiatives lacked the follow-through seen in the current program, which is driven by a strong governmental commitment. Ethiopia made a pledge at the Bonn Challenge and the New York Declaration Forum to restore 22 million hectares of damaged land by 2030.

"The Green Legacy program is a key component of that effort," the director explained. "We've observed significant progress in our restoration efforts since

2011."

Ethiopia's initiative is inspiring neighboring nations, with Kenya cited as a prime example. Aberu emphasized that while Ethiopia's contribution to global air pollution is minimal, its environmental restoration efforts are substantial.

"Ethiopia's dedication to environmental regeneration, increased participation in the green economy, and restoration of degraded lands strengthens its position within the international community." "This paves the way for countries with a significant air pollution footprint to fulfill their responsibility for remediation," Aberu remarked.

## Economists highlight...

to tariffs, taxes, and incentives to maximize the benefits of SEZs.

Birhanu Denu (PhD), another economist, noted that SEZs are not new to Ethiopia, as different industrial zones exist in various parts of the country. The main objective of these zones, implemented according to specific laws, is to drive rapid economic development within a limited geographic area.

"The lower taxes imposed on SEZs reflect the government's commitment to creating a favorable business environment. This approach not only encourages investor engagement but also attracts significant FDI."

Citing a study conducted two years ago, the economist highlighted that there are over 7,000 SEZs globally, underscoring their significance to national economy.

Birhanu mentioned that countries like China have successfully implemented SEZs, resulting in substantial economic growth.

"Ethiopia has established SEZs with the intention of creating significant employment opportunities, attracting FDI, and boosting exports," he stated. However, the expert emphasized that the government must continue to create a supportive business environment and offer various incentives, particularly tax exemptions, to achieve the desired outcomes in SEZs.

It is to be recalled that recently, the House of People's Representatives approved the Special Economic Zone Proclamation to speed up Ethiopia's economic progress by transferring industrial parks to a special economic zone system.

# Opinion

## The significance of Ethiopia's seaport access for regional security, development

BY ADDISALEM MULAT

It is important to highlight that the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that was signed between Ethiopia and Somaliland in order to access seaport to the former is a reasonable agreement that ensures the mutual benefit of the two and promotes sustainable peace and development in the region.

Accessing seaport is an existential issue for Ethiopia and its people. However, some nations are attempting to thwart Ethiopia's vision to accessing seaport without any relevant reason. Though they know the existing reality on the ground like the thumb of their hands, they intentionally engaged themselves in spreading cocked up stories.

As all and sundry know the circumstances on the ground and their nefarious intention, all their effortshave been going for nothing and getting off track.

Some opposing forces have been working around the clock with the intention of influencing the country's economic growth and worldwide influence. These nations feel concerned merelyabout their peculiar interests taking no notice of the role Ethiopia plays for stability and development of the horn of Africa.

The East African region port deal should be given global emphasis considering its greater significance to the entire Horn of Africa (HoA) region, the former US diplomat said.

Former Assistant Secretary of State for Africa and currently Texas Tech University Professor Emeritus Tibor Nagy said that Ethiopia's port quest and reached agreements should be supported by the global world as it would have a great potential to spur economic development and safeguard peace and security in the entire region.

The diplomat further remarked that the pact is also a significant monumental milestone towards addressing security related issues in the neighboring as well as in the Red Sea routes. He said: "Ethiopia, with close to about 130 million people, is the world's most populous landlocked nation has long been struggling for access to holding ports."

Besides Eritrea and Djibouti, he said that the country (Ethiopia) also borders four other coastal polities which include Sudan, Kenya, Somalia, and Somaliland. Unfortunately, it has long been depended on Djibouti as its single port with one road and railroad to move imports and exports.

The proposed port deal between Ethiopia and Somaliland is still at the aspirational Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) stage with many details to be defined, the general framework will benefit both. If the project is realized, it would have far-reaching security and economic benefits.

Speaking to the Ethiopian Press Agency



Access to sea port helps attaining sustainable development

(EPA), a Political Science Scholar Prof. Biruk Hailu in the recent past stated that Ethiopia's acquisition of a Seagate in the strategic, yet volatile region is of great significance to the area's maritime security and repulsing criminal activities.

The security of the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden will be more guaranteed if Ethiopia has direct access to a seaport and can participate well in maritime issues. Besides, the seaport plays a critical role in intensifying its commercial activities and deploying the naval forces. Therefore, Ethiopia's aspiration to direct access to port is justifiable and reasonable on legal, moral and other grounds.

Taking its large population and economic prowess into account, Ethiopia has been suffering a lot in the past 30 and plus years due to the absences of direct access to seaport and the loss has also had a lasting impact on its security and the public wellbeing.

Ethiopia's acquisition of a seaport from Somaliland comes based on two sides' interests and a win-win approach, not by any pressure or coercion.

Likewise, Ethiopia has many commercial ships that are operating as far as China and South America but no party to protect them. Therefore, the agreement would help to protect the ships security through cooperative approach, the expert emphasized.

The agreement reached between Ethiopia and Somaliland to facilitate access to seaport would address economic bottlenecks, said Ethiopian Shipping and Logistics (ESL).

Briefing Journalists, ESL CEO Beriso Amelo (PhD) recently said that, Ethiopia's economic growth and international reputation has been low for centuries as a result of absence of seaport. For this reason, the country's negotiating power has been reduced with regard to the growing price to seaport rental fees and the likes, he stated.

The agreement between Ethiopia and Somaliland to pave ways to possess seaport will expedite the cargo system, assure the development of the national economy, and improve Ethiopia's international reputation

and influence.

The pact is attributed to the peaceful diplomatic effort in which that benefit the nation in terms of job creation and other economic advantages as the country is an international trade actor. Ethiopia will develop the Somaliland's seaport to reap invaluable economic benefits.

The seaport will have numerous significances regarding achieving rapid economic growth which in return ensures unity among the people and consolidates the national defense force and embodies the nation international reputation.

In an exclusive interview with The Ethiopian Herald, Political Economic Analyst for Africa Lawrence Freeman said that, Ethiopia, with the largest economy in East Africa, needs multiple port access to facilitate and manage the growing trade and investment in the continent.

The analyst has remarked that, Ethiopia has also a great potential for growth that benefit all the countries in the region through trade expansion. Mentioning Ethiopia's immense military contribution to Somalia, he emphasized that the port diversification would be a viable solution to ensure economic growth in the entire neighbors.

As far as sustainable economic growth is concerned, the countries in the region should strengthen their joint forces without the intervention of external entities.

Ethiopia's long term access to multiple ports would have a paramount importance on realizing growth of the region and all African nations as well. In the same note, it is fundamental to make and sustain smooth investment chain across the region. It is, therefore, advisable to table continental and regional issues to AU, IGAD and other platforms that help amplify scopes of regional shared future and improve the lives of Africans.

All the leaders in the continent should hold discussions in the region to play their role and unleash their potentials that help promote stable regional economic development.

Speaking to the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA), Kings of Blue Nile Channel Director

Ustaz Jemal Bashir mentioned that different nations that are far from the region have maintained military bases in the Red Sea. "Accordingly, the effort and interest of Ethiopia, which is the nearest landlocked country to the Red Sea, need to secure its share."

While Ethiopia remains the leading actor in ensuring peace and stability in the Horn of Africa, it is unfair to oppose its interest to have a sovereign access to the sea. Those who are against the interest of Ethiopia have hidden agenda to destabilize the region, he emphasized.

Ethiopia needs to take the diplomatic and legal path to get access to the sea while he called on all segments of the society to discharge their responsibility to this end. Besides creating linkage with the outside world, Ethiopia's direct access to the sea enables it to save a huge amount of foreign currency that the country has incurred for port rent.

In a similar vein, in an interview Political Science Researcher Shimelis Hailu gave in recent times to a local media said owing to its history and proximity to the area, the country would have of a paramount importance on the sustainability of peace and security in the region and Red Sea as well. "Why it strange for Ethiopia, only 60 kilometers away from the sea, to establish a military base in Somaliland while different countries that are far away from the region already have a strong military presence?"

Mentioning the establishment of a council which is aimed at countering various maritime security threats and crimes, he remarked that Ethiopia's membership would help expedite the sustainability of regional peace and security.

As the Red Sea is the route that facilitates 10% of the global trade, he said that it is critical to consolidate surrounding countries' efforts to promote the economic and peace sustainability. "The escalating of terrorism, expansion of Al-Shabaab, chaos in Yemen and other related loopholes are becoming a threat to the region. Therefore, it is critical to make Ethiopia member of the council and beneficiary of sea outlet to help ease the tension in the region."

Leveraging its vibrant military base in the Horn of Africa, Ethiopia has been stretching its hands for the sustainability of peace and stability in the entire region, including Somalia and the Red Sea. In its historical background, Ethiopia, had managed protecting several ports in the Red Sea. Therefore, it is worth mentioning for respective countries to resonate their voices for Ethiopia to admit its quest to sea outlet and discharge its role in the region and ensure mutual benefit more than ever, the researcher remarked.

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

# Editorial

## Time to heed calls for peace

The prime and invaluable asset of human creatures, equivalent with basic necessities and even beyond is the issue of peace. Cognizant of the fact that no one can benefit out of conflict, rivalry and instability, the government of Ethiopia has been exerting relentless effort to ensure peace and tranquility across the country. Besides, it has called on conflicting parties especially in Oromia and Amhara states, to sit together, sort out the fundamental issues that potentially widen differences and devise possible solutions with a view to providing all citizens of the nation with a particular reference to the aforesaid states. It has recurrently been calling these parties who have stood against it to settle disputes by peaceful means and recommending methods of entertaining close talks and dialogs would help solve every problem into account.

Since Ethiopia is the pioneer in all aspects of African progress and change facets, it has to take the lead in properly applying the principle of African solutions to African challenges. Yes, no one can come and act accordingly to come up with stability and serenity unless citizens of the nation themselves have moved in a coordinated manner to attain lasting peace and help the entire citizens breathe a sigh of relief.

The government is also taking enforcement measures to maintain or restore peace and security across the nation thereby helping the country ensure lasting peace, which is the prime element contributing an incomparable role to the effort geared towards creating a stable country. Undeniably, Ethiopians are expected to end violent conflict, disagreements and artificial sources of disparity. The long-lasting culture of consulting one another does the tricks in this regard. The country has to move quickly from conflict ridden trajectory to constructive dialog for peace, making the government and other warring parties forerunners to that end. That is why the government has time and again call for peace deals and close talks to narrow the gaps and get the roots of conflict dried for good, if possible. Basically, negotiations to end conflict and war are never simple.

The best solution to get conflicts aborted is heartily entertaining the spirit of reconciliation and agreement. Wherever agreements are reached on key issues, the foundations of peace will be well reinvigorated and pushed in to fruition.

Hence, it is time to attach due emphasis to the calls that would lead to agreements and genuine negotiations. Though peace processes continue to become increasingly complex due to the protracted and fluid nature of armed conflict, the shifting composition of actors, things can be made easy via genuinely holding talks for lasting peace.

It is thus quite important for the government and other warring parties here and there to generate new thinking about the growing challenges for peace processes and developing ideas for greater effectiveness for the sake of common motherland, Ethiopia, and its beloved citizens.

Needless to state, agreeing for peace is an incomparable means and an invaluable stepping stone to usher the country in the path of a rosy future.

The cardinal reason for the government to foster a peace process by inviting warring elements could involve many steps to stop the immediate fighting, build trust between the parties, address specific issues, or present a framework for future political arrangements and nation's bollards leading to growth and development.

So long as Ethiopians are accustomed to solving local problems locally, they have to read one another's mind and devise possible solutions to the problems they have been through so far and they are expected to make the peace process transformative enough. Peace first!

# Opinion



## Ethiopia's fair stance to nurse refugees back to Normalcy

BY ADDISALEM MULAT

It is important to highlight that the federal government of Ethiopia has been working around the clock to create a conducive environment for refugees residing throughout the country more than ever before. Ethiopia goes to great lengths to meet the interests of refugees and host populations promptly. Despite some challenges, the desired goal is being accomplished through Ethiopia's continued efforts.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) has reaffirmed its commitment to supporting refugees and communities to improve livelihoods. In a recent statement to The Ethiopian Herald, ILO Country Director in Ethiopia, Alexio Musindo, emphasized that Ethiopia hosts thousands of refugees in the continent. He mentioned that his organization, along with governments and partners, is working to enhance the lives of communities and refugees through access to finance, skills development, and other opportunities.

In addition to safeguarding migrant workers, ILO is providing financial loans, capacity building, and business development services to enable them to engage in various business fields. The organization is striving to uplift hosting communities and refugees through initiatives such as job opportunities, business ventures, and economic empowerment, among others.

As migration becomes more complex and multi-faceted in the East and Horn of Africa, international partners and donors must strengthen advocacy and provide financial assistance. Given that 80% of migration is intra-regional, cross-border agreements between unions and countries can significantly address the issue.

The flow of people from all corners is characterized by mixed migration flows involving refugees, asylum-seekers, and migrant workers, placing a strain on regional governments as they struggle to manage the large number of migrants crossing their borders.

Countries in East Africa and the Horn of Africa have intensified efforts to enhance migration governance at national and regional levels based on continental and global initiatives and frameworks aimed at improving migration management.

The Refugees and Returnees Service (RRS) recently issued digital National ID cards for refugees for the first time in East Africa, enabling refugees to access critical services. Speaking at the launch ceremony, RRS Director General Teyiba Hassen highlighted the partnership with UNHCR and the National ID Program to

integrate refugees and asylum seekers into the Ethiopian National ID system.

Ethiopia has been working to realize an inclusive approach for refugees, improving their inclusivity over time. The issuance of digital IDs for over one million refugees is a testament to Ethiopia's commitment to humanity, neighborly support, and refugee rights.

The new system allows refugees to conduct basic activities such as opening bank accounts, accessing healthcare, employment, receiving cash transfers, applying for government documents, and accessing social protection and education, empowering them with greater control over personal data.

In a similar vein, in a press briefing held recently, Mercy Corps Country Director, Edwin Kuria said that the mini-grid project, which is a part of the Enter Energy Ethiopia program of Mercy Corps, will serve over 17,600 refugees and host community members, delivering much-needed energy to households, businesses, and essential services.

"Access to energy is a crucial driver of economic development, significantly improving living standards and enabling a multitude of socio-economic activities. Currently, over 114 million individuals worldwide have been forcibly displaced. In Ethiopia alone, millions of forcibly displaced people have less than seven percent access to energy. This scarcity not only hampers their well-being but also limits their ability to engage in productive activities and secure livelihoods," he noted.

The initiative marks a significant milestone in the ongoing efforts to provide clean, reliable, and customizable energy solutions to both displaced populations and their host communities.

It should be born in mind that UNHCR High Commissioner Filippo Grandi stopped in Ethiopia recently with the intention of meeting refugees and asylum seekers who have fled conflict in Sudan and become refugees in Kurmuk, Ethiopia.

Briefing journalists, the commissioner said that donors around the world should put their hands in supporting the refugees. "According to the global statistics, 90% of refugees do not go to Europe or America; rather, they flee from one poor country to another poor country. The problem is for the poor countries; it is not for the rich nations."

Since the conflict in Sudan began, millions have been displaced, with thousands crossing the Ethiopian border to Kurmuk. The registered refugees in Ethiopia number nearly one million, posing a significant burden on the country amid its own challenges.

**Editor's Note: The Author is Ambassador of Russian Federation to Ethiopia**



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The Ethiopian Herald

# Business & Economy

## Boosting state of dairy production in Ethiopia

BY MENGESHA AMARE

It is well recognized that livestock is an integral part of agriculture contributing to the household livelihood and economics of developing countries like ours. Livestock production and marketing of its products are essential to the livelihoods of more than one millions of people in Ethiopia.

Of the subsets of livestock production, dairy production in the country is predominantly subsistence, characterized by low production and productivity, dependent on local breeds, and managed under extensive grazing and uncontrolled breeding.

Keeping this in mind, *The Ethiopian Herald* conducted an interview with Taddese Hundie, who graduated from Haramaya University in agricultural economics, to have ample information about the economic significance of dairy farming.

He said, "Milk is produced dominantly from local breeds in Ethiopia, and milk and milk products is increasing in developing countries and the drivers of change to the dairy sector are demography, growing economies, underserved markets, conducive policy and enabling environment, globalization, and market opportunities."

As to Taddese, meeting the increasing demand for milk and dairy products cannot be realized without rapidly increasing the number of high producing tropically adapted cows, the number of commercial dairy herds, and the number of cows per herd and productivity per cow. To support the dairy sector, different interventions are expected to be made by the government, development partners, national and international research institutions, and non-governmental organizations.

True, the sector in Ethiopia is yet to fully realize its potential to produce enough milk and dairy products to meet the domestic demand. As a result, the country is forced to import powdered milk and other milk products. The major constraints on intensification of livestock in general and dairy in particular are unavailability of adaptable high-yielding improved genetics, lack of feed, animal diseases and poor animal health, extension and market services.

He said, "In Ethiopia, genetic improvement of indigenous breeds through crossbreeding and upgrading, and the accelerated production of crossbred cows from farmers' indigenous breeds, of course. However, the number of improved breeds in the country is still too small to transform the current subsistence-based smallholder dairy system to market oriented commercial dairy production and boost milk production to meet current and predicted future domestic demands."

Dairy production in Ethiopia is subsistence smallholder-based and characterized by low production and productivity. The annual production of livestock and livestock products in the country is too low to meet the current and projected demands of the growing human population. To attain government goals of poverty reduction, food security, nutrition, foreign currency earning, and contribute to the national economy; the current livestock production system must be transformed to a commercial market-



oriented one.

The dairy industry, its constraints, and interventions for its development in Ethiopia need to be well scrutinized. Actors in the dairy value chain and their engagement modalities are also suggested to bring a sustainable integrated dairy development. The main challenges in the dairy sector in the country that need to be prettily addressed are lack of market orientation; insufficient and inefficient input and service delivery; lack or limited private sector investment; weak regulatory institutions; limited technical, technological, and financial capacity; lack of market infrastructure and weak market linkages among actors in the value chain. Reorganizing and strengthening institutions supporting the dairy sector, creating an enabling environment for private sector participation, improving inputs supply (feed, improved breeds, artificial insemination and veterinary inputs), service provision (veterinary, extension, market, regulatory), value addition and market linkages, and strengthening research to develop high yielding tropically adapted dairy breeds.

He further said that, public sector interventions in selected and targeted investments have to be employed to revise existing and designing new policies, strategies, regulations, and standards supportive to the dairy sector transformation could lay a foundation for private sector investment. At the same time, development partners engaged in dairy development must be aligned with government initiatives for a better and wider impact.

He stated that, dairy production is generally a subsistence smallholder-based industry with relatively few small and medium commercial dairy farms. Despite the large number of indigenous breed milking cows in the country, their milk production and productivity remain low. Besides, limited availability of feed, high disease prevalence and poor animal health services, low level of husbandry, and limited extension and research support are also among the cardinal problems compromising the smooth flow of activities to boost the production and productivity of dairy sector.

The number of breeding male cattle is small compared to that of heifers and cows, and the large population of breeding female cattle provides an opportunity to make genetic improvement through their use as dams for production of crossbred heifers to support intensified dairying in the country. However, considering the small number

of breeding male animals, their poor distribution across the different production systems and the inefficient breeding strategy in place, continued use of such few males for breeding could lead to inbreeding or inadequacy of breeding bulls.

Most dairy farms do not keep breeding bulls because of the associated high feeding and management costs; male calves are culled at an early age. Dairy production in the country can be categorized into mixed crop-livestock, pastoral, specialized urban and peri-urban production systems. The pastoral system depends on indigenous breeds, which are managed under extensive rangeland grazing, and cattle are the main source of pastoral households' milk, cash, asset accumulation and savings.

With the expansion of commercial smallholder dairy production, and the extension support, farmers started keeping one or two crossbred cows and planting improved forages to supplement their milking animals. In the smallholder specialized urban and peri-urban dairy production system, which is mainly practiced in and around cities and towns, farmers keep both crossbred and exotic breeds of cows for producing milk for sale.

The transformation of smallholder subsistence dairying into market-oriented commercial dairy production requires engagement of smallholder farmers in commercial dairy farming and private investment in input supply, service delivery and milk value addition to overcome fluctuations in raw milk demand and supply due to seasonal consumption of animal products in the country.

Developing a country-specific dairy strategy that transforms the sector requires critical assessment of the opportunities and challenges and possible interventions.

The dairy sector in the country is based on subsistence production with low market orientation. Milk produced is consumed at the household level mainly due to low production and lack of market access, poorly organized marketing systems and an underdeveloped milk market infrastructure. A large proportion of the national cattle population is kept by smallholder farmers. In the mixed crop-livestock production system, cattle are kept for the purpose of producing draft oxen to support crop production. The resources used on such oxen could be released to support more commercial beef

and dairy production if they were to be replaced by small, mechanized alternatives.

The dairy sector has great potential for growth in Ethiopia. Concerted sustainable efforts from government and private sector are required to address the challenges hindering the growth of the sector and develop short-term and long-term plans of action to mitigate the bottlenecks in the dairy sector. Current efforts from different actors in the dairy value chain are worth acknowledging but are not enough, are fragmented, project driven, and lack continuity in area and type of intervention. In sum, both government-led platforms of actors and private sector investment are necessary to address current dairy development challenges. Private sector investment must be encouraged to lead the transformation of the sector. The process of decision-making in the dairy sector must be supported by evidence generated from national and international institutions and development partners. Since the sustainability of dairy development will only happen if the private sector fully participates and takes a lead in the overall development of the dairy sector, all concerned have to be active drivers of the progress wheel.

Although Ethiopia's milk production is facing some challenges, the continuous improvement of consumers' income, the formation of milk drinking habits, and governmental support have developed a large market potential for domestically produced dairy products and milk production.

Improving market competitiveness while ensuring economic and environmental sustainability is key to the prospects for the milk industry.

Sustainable development must be the future direction of the country's milk production. The combination of feed cropping and dairy farming is an effective part of a system to create job opportunities, assist economic development thereby achieving sustainable development. Compared with the traditional system that separates feed cropping and dairy farming, the combination that closely links these endeavors can contribute to a sustainable ecological agricultural system. The cropping provides forage for dairy farming, and the manure produced by the dairy herd serves as a source of fertilizer for cropping, which facilitates nutrient recycling and green development. The combination of crop production and the dairy farming system needs to be promoted by intensifying coordinated actions.

# In the Sphere of Diplomacy

## Ethiopia's successful diplomatic engagement at the BRICS forum

BY FITSUM GETACHEW

A few days ago Ethiopia took part in the BRICS political parties' forum as well as in the foreign ministers meeting in Vladivostok, Russia. At the parties' forum, Ethiopia was represented by Adem Farah, Vice President of Prosperity Party and Democracy Building Centre Coordinating Office Head with the rank of Deputy Prime Minister. Earlier Governor of the National Bank of Ethiopia and Ethiopia's Sherpa to the BRICS Mamo Mihretu took part in the meeting of Sherpas and Sous sherpas of member states. Similarly other diplomatic activities were undertaken by high-level Ethiopian officials at these meetings and for a where BRICS-related topics were raised and discussed not only at the organization level but also at the bilateral level between various relevant Ethiopian officials and other members of BRICS.

Similarly, Foreign Minister Taye Atskeselassie took part in the foreign ministers meeting to secure membership of Ethiopia in the newly formed New Development Bank which would be a huge advantage for Ethiopia to secure the funds it needs to continue with its economic development growth trajectory without too much anxiety of scarcity of funds, nor foreign currency.

The BRICS Dialogue with Emerging Markets and Developing Countries was attended by foreign ministers of BRICS members and non-BRICS developing countries in which emphasis was given to strengthening partnerships for common development and peace. Ambassador Taye on the occasion outlined the important measures taken by Ethiopia aiming to strengthen its role within BRICS and calling for an enhanced constructive role of the BRICS member countries on urgent international issues. Taye stressed that many international organizations need to be reformed in a manner to reflect the actual state of countries in the world drifting away from what was fixed eight or so decades ago. In this respect, the minister pointed out that the United Nations Organization needs to be reformed as well as the international financial institutions where developing countries would have a more equitable say or role.

In the discussions that took place for four days, Ethiopia could present its case to the BRICS members on various topics. The International Interparty "BRICS and Partner Countries" Forum Vice President of Prosperity Party Adem Farah explained Ethiopia's stance



on various topics of mutual interest highlighting the party's commitments to strengthening its engagement with the BRICS platform. He said the Prosperity Party has closely followed the BRICS platform since its establishment recognizing its potential to reshape the global economic and political sphere. He expressed the wish and vision of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) for increased engagement of the BRICS member states and the platform itself underscoring the involvement of Ethiopia in this dynamic coalition. Adam expressed his party's appreciation for the BRICS platform members for the bold step they took in inviting new members of the group which granted Ethiopia the possibility of joining it.

The Vice President said, "We are honored and delighted to be a part of BRICS, and we eagerly anticipate the collective progress and shared prosperity that our collaboration promises". He said the Prosperity Party is ready to advocate for BRICS objectives and is committed to contributing its share towards shared goals. "We are prepared to play our role as BRICS aims to reform global financial institutions and champion a multipolar world order. Adem also presented the vision of his party which is engaged in ensuring holistic prosperity in Ethiopia and beyond through the strategy of what is called in Amharic 'Medemer' or synergy.

Adem told the members at the forum "Prosperity Party has rapidly grown to become the largest political party in Africa with 14 million members. Founded on the multinational unity, freedom and dignity of citizens, the Prosperity Party has mobilized Ethiopians to achieve remarkable milestones across various sectors". Adem highlighted some of the achievements of his party to the delegates

noting the significant advancement in agricultural development by increasing production and productivity, ensuring food security and promoting a green legacy for sustainable development through the planting of over 32 billion tree seedlings in the past five years. He remarked that Ethiopia's economy is among the fastest-growing ones in the world and is now rated as the fifth-largest economy in Africa.

The Vice President underscored the Prosperity Party's firm stance on principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity, undivided and equal security, multilateralism, global justice and the peaceful coexistence of nations. Adem called for reforms to the 'unjust' international governance and financial systems highlighting the need for greater representation of Africa and Latin America on crucial platforms. He added that the international governance and political system, financial system and media narratives do not reflect the diversity of our world. He said with their significant populations Africa and Latin America remain underrepresented in crucial platforms such as the UN Security Council. Therefore, we strongly support efforts to reform the international governance system to be more inclusive and reflective of global diversity to ensure world majority for a multipolar world". The Vice President's address underscored the Prosperity Party's commitment to strengthening Ethiopia's ties with the BRICS nations and shaping a more equitable global landscape. At the forum Head of the Prosperity Party Capacity Building Sema Tiruneh and Head of the International Public Relations Addisu Arga were part of the delegation that took part in the discussions and events at the sidelines of the main meeting.

Summarizing the diplomatic activities and achievements of the past weeks the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Nebiyu Tedla highlighted the major bilateral engagements and economic diplomacy events including Foreign Minister Taye's discussions with the President of the 78th General Assembly of the United Nations to strengthen support for peace and development in Ethiopia. He outlined the various bilateral meetings and discussions between the Minister of State Addisu Araga with ambassadors and high-level diplomats of various countries including Finland, France, Austria, Greece and the UK's Special Envoy to the Horn of Africa.

At the end of the four-day forum of BRICS at Vladivostok under the theme "World Majority for Multipolar Order" a joint declaration of 24 points was issued. Speaking after the conclusion of the events, Ambassador Addisu Araga said that Ethiopia had registered an impressive diplomatic victory at the forum. He recalled that Ethiopia is known for its leading role in international solidarity from the League of Nations to the present United Nations and has made a great contribution from the establishment of the Organization of African Unity to the current African Union. Addisu said Ethiopia has affirmed its strong position for international and multipolar solidarity at the forum. Ethiopia has also demonstrated its effective diplomatic stature under Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's leadership and Prosperity Party by joining the BRICS group. Along with the main event at the forum, several bilateral meetings were held and Ethiopia has used the occasion to demonstrate and make known its stance on several matters of international relevance.

# Law & Politics

## A good omen for peace

BY SOLOMON WASSIHUN

The oppressive heat of the departing sunny season, which tests the limits of even the heavy-duty air conditioner, is almost gone. The winds have begun to clash with the resilient tree leaves and the loose rooftops. The frequency of intermittent rain and the rumbling of the sky are increasing. The main rainy season, Kiremt, is almost here. The annual nationwide tree planting campaign, part of the Green Legacy Initiative, has already commenced. As Kiremt approaches, changing the scenery of the land and the sky, several good omens are emerging to forecast the coming of peace to the Ethiopian political landscape.

The much-talked-about agenda-gathering conference held in the capital recently, as a part of the process for the National dialogue was hailed by Ethiopians both home and abroad, and created an enduring peace vibe. Moreover, it appears to have set a domino effect in the dynamic and unpredictable movement of Ethiopian politics by kick-starting popular action for open and frank discussion about peace.

People from all walks of life, community leaders, scholars, elders, religious leaders, the youth, women and the men in uniform have begun actively participating in open discussion forums, shouldering their collective responsibility to ensure lasting peace and stability. They are now putting their heads together to deliberate with government authorities on solving the peace equation, which remains a mystery and therefore unsolved for a long time now.

This is a huge step forward for building lasting peace and is worthy of every admiration. Now the wind of peace has started blowing even in the Amhara region, the part of the country that has seen the longest series of violence, instability, and lawlessness for almost a year now. People in the region are now determined, and making a unified 'chorus', chanting 'Peace for all and all for peace'. They have been holding a series of peace conferences from the village up to the regional level to bring normalcy to their region.

The determination of the federal and regional authorities to sit and deliberate directly with the representatives of the communities at the grassroots level is indicative of their unwavering commitment to travel the extra mile to build peace at any cost. The peace conference held at the regional level at Bahir Dar has identified ten points as commendations that would provide directions and identify focal areas of activity to build and sustain peace in the

region.

It is expected that the authorities would act upon the outcome of the peace conference, which could be guiding principles for peace-building measures that should be translated into action by all stakeholders including the government. There is little doubt that the government would soon announce further bold actions based on the recommendation to expedite the momentum of the faint wind of peace that is starting to swish across the nation.

It is to be recalled that, speaking at the Abbay Bridge inauguration ceremony a month ago, Premier Abiy Ahmed (PhD) stressed the need to promote frank discussion among citizens, build common understanding, and share vision among all Ethiopians. "It is imperative to demolish the walls of divisive narratives, and build the bridge of narratives that nurture cooperation harmony, and peaceful coexistence among Ethiopian communities of various backgrounds and identities."

Another piece of evidence proving the arrival of the wind of peace in Ethiopia is the successful execution of the bi-elections and rerun elections in various regions. Elections are primary indicators for the presence of sustainable and viable peace and stability in a given area. That means if it is possible to hold an election in a region, it is a definite affirmative confirmation of the presence of peace and stability in that region to an acceptable degree of normalcy that allows people to go about their daily routines as usual.

What is more interesting is some of these places that held elections a few days ago were the ones that were too insecure and unstable to conduct elections at the regular time when the 6th general election was held, which was in June 2021. One such region was the Benishangul Gumuz region, which was one of the most violence-riddled places in the country at that time.

Now the region by large has become stable and peaceful enough to hold elections with no reports of incidents of violence.

Citizens who were displaced in the wake of the violence in the region are back to their homes and livelihoods. Investors are now returning to Benishangul Gumuz to create wealth for themselves, job opportunities for their compatriots, and revenue for the state by harnessing the untapped rich natural resources of the region, which include fertile farmland, water resources, animal resources, thick forests like that of bamboo trees, and precious minerals.

The head of the National Election Board of Ethiopia, NEBE, announced a few days ago that her office has

successfully conducted rerun elections and bi-elections in four regions of the country, which are Afar, Somali, Central Ethiopia, and Benishangul Gumuz regions. The peaceful electoral processes held a few days ago covered a considerable portion of the population in 29 constituencies which include 1218 polling stations.

This is a huge achievement for Ethiopia that would boost and propagate the vibe of normalcy to another part of the country that needs sustainable peace and stability. It can be considered a good omen and reflection of the inevitable transition toward sustainable peace and the rule of law. Unfortunately, the peaceful electoral process and its successful execution did not get the adequate media coverage that it deserves.

The continued release of prisoners is also an encouraging step by the government, which can be seen as a gesture of peace, reconciliation and forgiveness. It can also be seen as another indicator of the government's change of heart and its commitment to laying the foundation for lasting peace in Ethiopia. Several people who were in police custody and others who were charged in court and suspected and accused of alleged involvement in subversive and anti-peace activities are now free from prison.

Such gestures of peace by the government are eagerly awaited in the coming weeks as they would encourage all actors in Ethiopian politics to do their part in taking bold and reconciliatory steps in the interest of peace to ensure that the faint wind of peace becomes as strong as the increasing wind of the rainy season, which is getting stronger every day.

The good omen of peace is real it is not just a feeling or wishful thinking. It is based on a solid foundation, as set out in the above points. Because one thing should be clear. Ethiopians are tired of hearing news about violence. They want peace, and they want it now. The government has declared its willingness to meet with anyone for peace talks under any circumstances and without preconditions. We do believe the government is ready to put every in its power at the negotiating table in the interest of peace.

Rejecting the invitation to peace talks offered by the government rightly would be an absolute historical blunder and would mean going against the will and desire of the Ethiopian people and would have enormous consequences. Therefore, any political power has no wise choice but to accept the offer of peace talks if it wants to maintain its popular support, relevance, and political survival.

***Ethiopians are tired of hearing news about violence. They want peace, and they want it now. The government has declared its willingness to meet with anyone for peace talks under any circumstances and without preconditions***



# Society

## Ensuring long term economic impact via *Ye Lemat Tirufat*

BY LEULSEGED WORKU

Gode, one of the oldest towns in the Gode Zone of the Somali State in the eastern part of Ethiopia, had gone through a number of challenges as a result of conflicts and other related occurrences that took place in the surrounding area for several years. However, these days, the town is experiencing remarkable progress in various areas.

The agricultural sector is one of the sectors where the town is experiencing remarkable achievements. The success gained in the area of animal husbandry, infrastructural development and service sector are living witnesses for the economic revival of Gode. In turn, several members of the society, especially the youth, are enjoying the fruits of their efforts.

Mainly, as a result of the drive initiated by the government under *Ye Lemat Tirufat* with a target to ensuring nutritional opulence and food self-sufficiency at family and national levels through maximizing production and productivity, the youths in Gode are able to earn more money. The other way round, the chain of markets created by the active engagement of the youth in the town has also enabled neighboring places to get dairy products with reasonable prices and they are able to fill the market gap.

Salahadin Ibrahim, resident of Gode, is among the beneficiaries who can take full advantage of *Ye Lemat Tirufat* and reap considerable benefits from the initiative.

As he stated, he started his business with the limited money he had saved. Using the capital he had, Salahadin bought 500 chickens. However, now, thanks to his effort and *Ye Lemat Tirufat* project, his capital has increased dramatically. With the income he generated by selling eggs, Salahadin's capital has now increased to three million. Besides generating income, the youth in Gode are also playing substantial role in filling market gap not only in the town but also in adjacent areas.

Abdu Hassen (MD) is another beneficiary in the State who actively engaged in poultry farming in Jigjiga Town. According to him, the multidimensional support the government has been providing coupled with the reform program, have brought a positive change in the State. According to him, the poultry farming has initiated several youths, created job opportunities, helped young people to add value in the poultry production potential of the market and to benefit meaningfully by supplying eggs to consumers.

As indicated by State's President Mustefe Mohamed, *Ye Lemat Tirufat* program is improving food supply and chain in the State helping the youth to generate considerable income.

According to him, the State has an estimated 50 million livestock population. Using this resource as an opportunity, there is an initiative to increase production and productivity in the area by facilitating



**By fostering collaboration, innovation, and resilience, *Ye Lemat Tirufat* program is paving the way for a brighter and more prosperous future for all Ethiopians**

market opportunities and installing market centers where producers and consumers can interact and exchange goods and services.

“Several activities are being carried out in the State in relation to *Ye Lemat Tirufat*; and encouraging results have been achieved in chicken, eggs, fishery and beekeeping farming. The works accomplished in the development of animal husbandry under the program are not only improving the food supply and food system but also provide adequate nutrition for the community. What is more, Mustefe said that efforts that are made to modernize the sector are yielding positive results.

In related news, the Women and Social Affairs Minister revealed that *Ye Lemat Tirufat* Program is producing a positive result in Harari State.

According to Minister Ergogie Tesfaye (PhD), farming and animal husbandry activities that are carried out in the State are bearing positive results. According to her, several farming activities which are being carried out in the region are improving the lifestyle of the society and increasing production and productivity. Youth that engage in poultry beekeeping and animal husbandry are creating job opportunities for several youths in the State. Ergoige said that *Ye Lemat Tirufat* program is also ensuring food security to the society.

Speaking on her part, Harari State Deputy Head, Roza Ummar said that due to *Ye Lemat Tirufat* program, several members of the society are being benefited from the fruits of their hands.

According to her, individuals who engaged in beekeeping, poultry, animal husbandry and other farming practices are earning money and several immigrants, women, farmers and other members of the society are supporting themselves and their families because of the opportunities created by *Ye Lemat Tirufat* program.

Vice President of Gambella State Thakuey Jock also said that the program is providing job opportunities for several youth. According to him, farmlands that were once idle are now being cultivated and earning income for the society. She also said the program is shifting the working culture of the community.

Indeed, *Ye Lemat Tirufat* program has represented a vital step towards achieving sustainable progress and development in Ethiopia. By addressing key challenges, promoting inclusivity, and empowering communities, the program is laying the foundation for a more prosperous and equitable society for generations to come.

The program's future prospects are promising as it continues to expand its reach, engage with diverse communities, and adapt to evolving challenges. By fostering collaboration, innovation, and resilience, *Ye Lemat Tirufat* program is paving the way for a brighter and more prosperous future for all Ethiopians.

*Ye Lemat Tirufat*, also known as Bounty of Basket, is an ambitious development initiative spearheaded by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD), aims to uplift communities, improve livelihoods, and drive sustainable progress across the country.

This project is driven by a vision of inclusive development and prosperity for all Ethiopians. The Bounty of Basket (*Ye Lemat Tirufat*) Project has been rolled out across various areas in Ethiopia, with a focus on grassroots engagement and community participation.

As the Bounty of Basket (*Ye Lemat Tirufat*) Project progresses, it remains committed to sustainability, inclusivity, and long-term impact. By fostering partnerships, leveraging local resources, and promoting community-led solutions, the project aims to create a legacy of prosperity and development that lasts for generations.

# International News

## South Africa:

### 'Unprecedented' government of National Unity to roll up its sleeves

President Cyril Ramaphosa addresses the nation on the appointment of the new Cabinet

President Cyril Ramaphosa has officially announced his new cabinet and South Africa is now firmly into the seventh administration - led by what the President has termed an "unprecedented" Government of National Unity (GNU).

The President announced the members of cabinet on Sunday evening, about a month after the National and Provincial Elections were held on 29 May 2024.

"The incoming government will prioritize rapid, inclusive and sustainable economic growth and the creation of a more just society by tackling poverty and inequality," President Ramaphosa assured the country, as he addressed the nation from the Union Buildings in Pretoria.

This year's General Election results produced no outright majority winner - tasking various political leaders to work together to form a government, much like what was required at the dawn of democracy in 1994.

Some 11 political formations have come together and signed a Statement of Intent to work together to form a GNU, reflective of the representatives from those parties.

"The establishment of the Government of National Unity in its current form is unprecedented in the history of our democracy. We have had to consider how to form the new government in a manner that advances the national interest, that gives due consideration to the outcome of the election and that makes use of the respective capabilities within each of the parties.

"We have had to consider not only the immediate needs of the country. We have also had to consider the stability, effectiveness and durability of the government we are establishing," he said.

With Ministers and Deputy Ministers now coming from a plethora of parties, President Ramaphosa told the nation that those appointed to those positions will work to serve all South Africans and not just those who voted for them.

"These men and women we have appointed to the executive are drawn from all corners of our country. They reflect the diversity of our nation. They have a responsibility to work together to serve the people as a whole.

"None of the members of the National Executive has been appointed to serve the interests of a particular constituency, a particular party or a particular section of



President Cyril Ramaphosa addresses the nation on the appointment of the new Cabinet

society," he said.

#### Strengthening democracy

Turning to the length of time it has taken to form a cabinet, President Ramaphosa soothed concerned South Africans - pointing out that other countries have taken longer to walk the same path.

"[Many] people have pointed to the experiences of other countries that have a far longer history of democracy, where the formation of multi-party governments has sometimes taken several months.

"As a relatively young democracy, we should be proud that we have moved to establish a government comprised of eleven

parties within such a short space of time.

"Through our discussions we have been able to build consensus on the tasks of government. We have shown that there are no problems that are too difficult or too intractable that they cannot be solved through dialogue," he emphasized.

#### National Dialogue

With the cabinet announced, a National Dialogue is expected to be convened by the incoming GNU and other formations in the "spirit of partnership and collaboration".

"Through this National Dialogue, all parties, civil society groups, labor, business and other stakeholders will be invited to work together to address the critical challenges facing the nation.

"We call on all South Africans to participate in the National Dialogue and to give their support to this Government of National Unity as it begins its work.

"As the leaders of political parties, as Ministers and Deputy Ministers, as public representatives, we understand and accept the responsibility that we bear. We have all been called upon to serve the people of this country, and we will do so to the utmost of our ability," President Ramaphosa concluded.

Source: *SAnews.gov.za*.

## Prices of Kenya's imported second-hand cars fall as shilling rallies against dollar

The Kenyan prices of some popular brands of imported second-hand cars have dropped by double-digits between January and this month, driven by the shilling's rally against the dollar.

Dealers said that prices have been easing since the start of the year, offering relief to price-sensitive Kenyans who opt for the used units.

The official exchange rate from the Central Bank of Kenya (CBK) shows that the shilling exchanged at 128.67 units to the greenback compared to 160.8 units as of January.

A 2017 Landcruiser Prado TX for instance now goes for Ksh4.5 million (\$0.036million) compared to Ksh5.3 million (\$0.0424m) at the start of the year, or a 17.7 percent drop, while a used 2017 Subaru Outback is now retailing at Ksh2.5 million (\$ 0.02m), down from Ksh3 million (\$0.024m) in January-a 16.6 percent drop.

The price drops offer relief to Kenyans who had been forced to shelve purchases of second-hand cars last year when prices skyrocketed amid the shilling's woes against the dollar.

"Prices have gone down because of the shilling's recovery against the dollar," Cindy Ndeda, marketing manager at the Kenyan office of SBT Japan said.

"We have seen price drops as a result of how the shilling has gained against the dollar,"



Second-hand motor vehicles on display at a yard in Mombasa County, Kenya. PHOTO | FILE | NMG

Kenya Auto Bazaar Association secretary-general Charles Munyori.

The dollar is the currency used in Kenya to pay for imported goods, including motor vehicles, fuel, and furniture and a strengthening of the shilling has the impact of lowering the cost of the imports.

An official at Vozilo Motors, another car dealer in the city also said that prices of the units had dropped, singling out Nissan Note which now goes for Ksh850,000 (\$6,576), down from Ksh1 million (\$7,736) at the close of the year.

A Mercedes Benz C200 is going for Ksh3 million (\$23,210) compared to Ksh3.5 million (\$27,079) while a Nissan X-Trail is

retailing at Ksh2 million (\$0.016m), a drop from the Ksh2.3 million (\$0.0184m) at the start of the year.

Falling prices offer a major boost to dealers who have since last year grappled with low sales as prices of the units soared in the wake of the shilling's woes against the dollar. The shilling had been on a free-fall since 2021, directly affecting prices of imported goods such as used cars and petroleum products.

Prices of second-hand cars had surged by upwards of Ksh600,000 (\$0.0048m) in the last four months of 2023, underscoring the impact of the shilling's woes.

Dealers had earlier projected that prices of imported second-hand cars would drop in the

wake of the shilling's rally against the dollar.

Japan is the single biggest source of second-hand cars in Kenya, with the popularity of the units driven by their low prices relative to the new cars.

Second-hand cars are popular in Kenya due to their low prices compared to the new motor vehicles. The United Kingdom is another source of used cars imported into Kenya.

Kenya allows importation of second-hand cars within an eight-year age limit, meaning that used units that were manufactured before 2017 are barred from being imported into the local market.

Source: *The East African*

# Planet Earth

## National Green Legacy Initiative creates additional value chain in socio-economic development of Ethiopia

BY SOLOMON DIBABA

This year's implementation of the Green Legacy Initiative has already been made public through a pre-launch ceremony conducted here in Addis Ababa in the presence of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed.

The purpose of this contribution is to shed light on the systemic linkage of value chains that the National Green Legacy has introduced in the socio-economic development of Ethiopia.

The author of this article has already stressed in a previous article that the National Green Legacy Initiative is not just about planting trees. In this contribution, an attempt will be made to outline the interconnection between value chains ushered by the initiative.

The Green Legacy Initiative in Ethiopia, launched by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed in 2019, aims to combat climate change, restore biodiversity, and ensure sustainable development. The initiative involves the mass planting of billions of trees across the country. Below, the author attempts to provide a breakdown of the value chain in the introduction of the Green Legacy Initiative:

- Collecting a variety of seeds from indigenous and drought-resistant trees to ensure ecological compatibility and sustainability is the first step in the process of value chain linkage of the NGLI.

- Establishing nurseries for germinating and nurturing seedlings before they are ready for planting is the next step. This involves both governmental and community-led nurseries.

- Growing seedlings in nurseries under controlled conditions to ensure healthy plants is followed by preparing the land for planting, which includes soil testing and ensuring the soil is conducive for the selected tree species. Efficiently transporting seedlings from nurseries to planting sites across different regions in Ethiopia is another important element of the value chain.

- Coordinating the distribution process to ensure timely delivery and minimize seedling loss during transportation. Engaging local communities, schools, public ministries, institutions, and organizations to participate in the planting activities fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility. Implementing best practices for planting to ensure high survival rates of the seedlings, including spacing, depth, and protection from grazing animals. Regular watering, weeding, and protection of young trees to ensure their growth and survival is part of the operational value chain. Conducting periodic assessments to track the growth, health, and impact of the planted trees is important.

- Promoting agroforestry and the use of

tree products (e.g., fruits, nuts, timber) to generate income for local communities needs to be encouraged. Enhancing biodiversity, improving soil fertility, mitigating climate change through increased carbon sequestration is one of the components of the entire process of the value chain. Linking tree farmers with markets for selling tree products and accessing financial services. Utilizing green spaces and forests to boost eco-tourism and create additional revenue streams.

- Establishing policies that support reforestation, afforestation, and sustainable land management practices is a pertinent approach in the process of promoting value chain in the sector. Collaborating with international organizations for technical and financial support, as practiced in previous years, could be conducted in a sustained manner.

The environmental rehabilitation and protection conducted every year by an average of 20 million citizens in Ethiopia set the ground for massive tree planting. The campaign that is conducted every year has helped to retain the topsoil in various regions of the country and also contributed to the reduction of soil erosion and landslides during the rainy season.

Trees planted across the country over the last five years also included fruit trees that contributed to the formation of food forests in various ecological zones of the country. Food forests also provided shelters for indigenous plants that were mostly used as inputs for the preparation of traditional herbal medicines in Ethiopia.

Food forests are a sustainable agricultural practice that integrates a variety of plants in a way that mimics natural forest ecosystems, providing diverse and perennial food sources. In Ethiopia, the concept of food forests has gained attention as a strategy to combat food insecurity, enhance biodiversity, and promote sustainable land use.

Food forests typically consist of multiple layers of vegetation, including canopy trees, understory trees, shrubs, herbs, ground cover plants, vines, and root crops. This diversity helps create a resilient ecosystem. Unlike annual crops, perennials do not need to be replanted every year, which reduces soil disturbance and conserves resources. Plants are chosen and arranged to support each other, enhancing nutrient cycling, pest control, and water management.

By providing a continuous and varied food supply, food forests can improve food security for local communities. Food forests enhance biodiversity by creating habitats for various plant and animal species. The diverse root systems and organic matter from food forests improve soil structure and fertility. Food forests can help mitigate climate change by

sequestering carbon and reducing the need for chemical inputs. In addition, outputs from food forests promote nutrition for children, lactating mothers, and the elderly by preventing micronutrient malnutrition. People who suffer from high blood pressure, persons with diabetes, and those who live with the HIV virus can use various fruits and vegetables that they can produce in their backyards or community plots.

Successful food forest projects often involve local communities in the planning and implementation stages to ensure that the forests meet local needs and are sustainably managed. Providing training for farmers and communities on permaculture principles and food forest management is crucial for the success of these projects. Integrating food forests with traditional Ethiopian agricultural practices can enhance acceptance and sustainability.

Trees have deep root systems that help improve the infiltration of rainwater into the soil, increasing groundwater recharge. This helps replenish aquifers, crucial for maintaining water supply during dry periods. Additionally, the roots of trees and other vegetation improve soil structure, reducing soil compaction and increasing the soil's ability to absorb and retain water.

Trees and vegetation cover help stabilize the soil, preventing erosion, and reducing runoff. This not only preserves fertile land but also ensures that more rainwater seeps into the ground rather than running off the surface. By reducing erosion, trees help prevent the siltation of rivers and reservoirs, maintaining their capacity and water quality.

Forests and trees release water vapor into the atmosphere through transpiration, which can increase local humidity levels. This can potentially lead to more precipitation and contribute to a more stable local climate. Trees can moderate temperatures, which can have a favorable effect on local weather patterns, including rainfall.

Forested areas act as natural water catchments, helping regulate the flow of water into rivers and lakes. This ensures a more consistent supply of water downstream, even during dry seasons.

Furthermore, forests help slow down the flow of water during heavy rains, reducing the risk of floods, which can damage water infrastructure and reduce water availability. Healthy forests support diverse ecosystems crucial for maintaining the natural water cycle. This includes the support of species that play roles in water purification and regulation. By creating habitats for various plant and animal species, reforestation efforts contribute to overall ecosystem resilience, critical for sustaining water resources.

The National Green Legacy Initiative

was also instrumental in generating job opportunities for thousands of Ethiopians to earn their livelihood by working in thousands of tree nurseries established across the country. Youth across the country are engaged in rehabilitating degraded hillsides and ridges, planting fruit trees, and developing nurseries for tree planting.

The Green Legacy Initiative in Ethiopia, which aims to plant billions of trees, is not only significant for combating deforestation and climate change but also plays a crucial role in protecting wild animals. Here are some ways in which the initiative supports wildlife conservation:

The large-scale tree planting efforts help restore and expand habitats for various wildlife species. Forests provide essential shelter, food, and breeding grounds for animals, many of which are endangered or threatened. By connecting fragmented forests, the initiative helps create biodiversity corridors that allow animals to move freely between different habitats, critical for species that need large territories to survive.

Healthy forests support a diverse range of flora and fauna, maintaining the ecological balance necessary for many species' survival. Forests act as a haven for numerous insects, birds, mammals, and other organisms. Trees and plants within restored forests provide food sources for herbivores and indirectly for predators, sustaining the food chain and supporting overall biodiversity.

Forests help regulate local climates, creating favorable conditions for wildlife. Cooler temperatures, increased humidity, and more stable weather patterns benefit both plant and animal life. By absorbing carbon dioxide, forests help mitigate climate change, a significant threat to many species. Stable climates reduce the stress on wildlife populations and their habitats.

Forests play a critical role in conserving water by enhancing groundwater recharge and maintaining river flows. Many wildlife species depend on these water sources for survival. Trees planted near wetlands help protect these ecosystems, vital habitats for many species, including amphibians, birds, and mammals.

Planting trees in line with the Green Legacy Initiative fosters communication and correspondence between the masses of people annually engaged in the tree planting campaign. By developing a new and modern culture of protecting the natural environment in Ethiopia, NGLI has helped promote a common narrative of working together for the benefit of all Ethiopians. As noted earlier, the spirit of understanding and consensus-building has now become a common socio-psychological heritage, crucial for ensuring peace, unity, and territorial integrity in the country.