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Tekie Berhan

## Enterprise elevates Nat'lexports with rigorous quality testing

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

ADDIS ABABA - The Ethiopian Conformity Assessment Enterprise (ECAE) announced that it is leveraging nine specialized testing laboratories to enhance the penetration of the nation's export products into global markets while maintaining their quality.

These laboratories are engaged in biochemical and electromechanical testing to ensure that both local and

See Enterprise elevates... Page 3

## Currency swap: Emerging tradition in global finance

BY YESUF ENDRIS

Currency swap among countries is flickering hope to emerging economies like Ethiopia, for facilitating transaction, stimulating the financial industry and reducing cost of

imports detached from the dependency on dominant foreign currencies.

Major economies are responding to the global financial system by shifting away from the United States dollar. Russia and China have already replaced the USD with their own

currencies for over 90 percent of their mutual transactions. This trend continued into this year when Iran and Russia signed a similar agreement. Other nations are also setting up alternative payment systems to reduce reliance on USD.

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## Commissioner says Nat'l Dialogue crucial step toward democracy

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

HARAR- Holding a National Dialogue is fundamental to building democracy in the nation, emphasized Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission (ENDC) Commissioner, Tegegnework Getu (PhD), during the closing event of the agenda-gathering in Harari State.

Over six consecutive days, Harari State hosted an inclusive, democratic, and participatory agenda-gathering consultation. Commissioner Tegegnework highlighted that National Dialogue reflects the culture of a civilized society.

The Commissioner noted that the agenda-  
See Commissioner says ... Page 3

## Ethiopia streamlining efforts to reverse energy landscape

- Promoting electrification to expansion

BY ASHENAFI ANIMUT

ADDIS ABABA - In parallel with the national electrification program, Ethiopia is intensifying expansion efforts to ensure modern and sustainable energy access by 2030, senior energy advisor stated.

The Ministry of Water and Energy (MoWE), Senior Policy Advisor Gosaye Mengistie told the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that the country has been strictly implementing energy policy and a 10-Year development program by crafting focus areas to change the energy landscape.

Equally he pointed out that the ministry has also set National Electrification Program in

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# News

## Macroeconomic reform addresses private sector challenges: AACCSA

BY MESERET BEHAILU

**ADDIS ABABA** – Besides facilitating economic stability and enhanced growth, the recent macro-economic reform would bring meaningful impact in addressing private sector challenges, Addis Ababa Chamber of Commerce and Sectoral Association (AACCSA) disclosed.

AACCSA organized a half day discussion forum yesterday in collaboration with Ethiopian Coffee Association under the theme: “The impacts of the major revision of a country’s foreign exchange system on the national economy.”

In her opening remark, AACCSA’s President Mesenbet Shenkute said that the recent macroeconomic reform would help to reduce foreign currency crunch, increase investment and encourage export among others.

As to the president, the private sector has



been facing foreign currency shortages and loan accesses in the past over many years.

She added that the sector has been playing an indispensable role in creating jobs,

boosting production and productivity and maximizing revenues, while challenges related to infrastructure gaps, inflation, and others have hindered the sector’s competitiveness at the international level.

However, the recent macroeconomic reform mainly the implementation of floating foreign exchange rate will address the aforementioned challenges, Mesenbet expressed.

Ethiopian Coffee Association General Manger Gizat Worku on his part said that free floating exchange rate encourages export. For instance, coffee export shares 40% of country’s hard currency earning and creates multiple jobs. Therefore, the macroeconomic reform helps to facilitate the market.

In Ethiopia, there was a high risk of loan in addition to other accumulated problems in the economy for the past many years. If the reform was not carried out now, the country’s economy would have faced a serious problem, participants agreed. Economic experts, senior government officials including representatives from the National Bank of Ethiopia (NBE) have attended the forum.

## Political parties urged to prioritize Nat’l interests over ideologies

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

**HARAR**—Representatives from various political parties have called on all factions to actively participate in National Dialogue, emphasizing the need to prioritize the nation’s interests over party ideologies.

Asfachew Balcha from the EZEMA Party urged parties to unite despite ideological differences, stressing that past disagreements have led to complications that could be resolved through collective effort.

Tesfahun Milkye, Chairperson of the All Ethiopian Unity Organization, Harari Branch, highlighted the importance of focusing on areas of national consensus, even if complete agreement is not reached.

Tesfahun also noted that his party has been engaged with the Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission for two years in participant identification, confident that the process will address the concerns of people at both the state and national levels.

The Chairperson called on those political parties that refused to involve in the National Dialogue to join the process.

Mahlet Zewidu from EZEMA also emphasized the need to capitalize on common issues, urging parties to see the dialogue as a vital opportunity to resolve longstanding national issues.

Hussein Suleiman, Chairperson of the Harari Democratic Organization Party’s Harari Branch, called for openness and patience from all political actors to ensure the success of the National Dialogue.

## Policy reform empowering agri-exporters to increase foreign currency earnings

**ADDIS ABABA** - The targeted support for private agricultural investments and the recently implemented macroeconomic policy reform will empower agricultural product growers and exporters, Agriculture State Minister Sophia Kassa said.

The state minister told ENA on the side lines of the Ethiopian Agricultural Investment Forum that conducive environment has been created for private sector investment in the agriculture sector.

Government institutions, including the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ethiopian Investment Commission, and the Development Bank of Ethiopia, support investment in agriculture, she added.

“The new measures have greatly stimulated, especially exporters, to generate more revenue and we will see the result in the near future,” Sophia stated.

According to her, the new macroeconomic reform catalyzes investment especially in agricultural production and export.

“We are creating a more favorable environment for both domestic and foreign investment in agriculture.”

The state minister noted that Ethiopia’s abundant water resources, fertile soil, human resources, enabling technologies and supportive government policies create a compelling investment climate in the agriculture sector.

“We have the ecology to cultivate all agricultural products. We have water, soil; and we have the capacity to produce by integrating the human resource and some technologies.”

The government has been actively providing land, incentives, finance, and technical assistance to encourage private sector participation in the sector.

“When the private sector engages in this



agriculture sector we have land supply in many regions, investors are very much encouraged and supported by government institutions. The Development Bank of Ethiopia has started lending to projects in agriculture. The ministry of Agriculture also provides technical support including coordinating extension support.”

Therefore, we invite investors to harness Ethiopia’s agricultural potential, Sophia stated, adding that smallholder farmers can also play a vital role in achieving food security and boosting the economy.

Meanwhile, at the exhibition organized along side the forum were displayed products and technology, including tractors, combine harvesters, specialized seeds, and organic fertilizers.

One of the participants, Getish Desta of the Afriflower praised the government’s recent decision to release 100 percent of foreign currency earnings, creating a stimulating environment for investment and attracting

investors.

“Previously only 50 percent of the USD was released. Now, the government gives all the money. This is a big stimulation for investment. It also attracts investors. All in all the government has taken decisive measures to solve problems and attract investors.”

YBM Trading Manager Teferi Amena highlighted his company’s role in processing avocados from thousands of farmers and generating hard currency through agro-processing.

He emphasized the benefits of operating in government-supported industrial parks with complete infrastructure.

The forum and the exhibition are timely and crucial for showcasing Ethiopia’s agricultural potential to domestic and foreign investors as the country implements economic reforms to address challenges, boost manufacturing and exports.

# News

## Ethiopia streamlining efforts to reverse...

2017 and updating in 2019 to achieve 100% universal electricity access nationwide by 2030 from renewable energy sources through both on-grid and off-grid schemes thereby reaching 54%.

“Energy security, expanding our power sector transmission, substation and distribution infrastructure for national and regional power trade and exchange and energy efficiency improvement are among the major focus areas to address electricity access challenges,” he highlighted.

Although there has been an electrification rate progress in recent years, Gosaye emphasized that the expansion rate is still far from what is needed to achieve universal electricity access due to limited funding, weak execution capacity and lack of imported inputs.

Moreover, traditional biomass fuels remain the primary source of rural household fuel with firewood, charcoal and agro-residue

contributing approximately more than 86% of the total energy supply, he noted.

“They are currently working on new approaches by preparing the clean cooking national roadmap and investment plan to expedite the delivery of electricity access in line with the sustainable development goals target and reaching about 20 million households by 2030,” he said.

Given its energy mix and advantageous geographic location, he stressed that Ethiopia is well positioned to become a regional energy hub and a major green energy exporter in the Eastern Africa Power Pool (EAPP).

“The renewable energy generation capacity is expected to be increased from the current 4.5 GW to more than 17 GW in 2030,” Gosaye added.

Recognizing the urgent need to transition towards a sustainable energy future, he

added that the ministry has also developed a Sustainable Energy Development Strategy for the period of 2024-2030.

United Nations Trade and Development (UNCTAD) Regional Office for Africa Chief Diane Sayinzoga for her part emphasized that significant upfront investment is needed to build renewable energy installations, and weak power grids represent important barriers for poorer countries, prolonging reliance on fossil fuels.

According to their World Investment Report last year, which focused on investment in the energy transition, countries with low rates of access to electricity are benefiting the least from international investment in renewable energy assets, she indicated.

Diane expressed commitments to provide technical assistance to Ethiopia’s climate change targets and projects as part of our broader work on investment and energy.

## Enterprise elevates ...

international products meet the mandatory and voluntary standards set by Ethiopia and international bodies, thereby bolstering the national product brand and image.

In a interview with *The Ethiopian Herald*, ECAE Marketing and Communication Director Tekie Berhan said that the electromechanical laboratory conducts testing on over 70 types of products across more than 370 parameters. These products include electrical, mechanical, textile, leather, and packaging materials, all tested by a team of 300 skilled professionals, including chemists and microbiologists.

“Our mission is to protect the well-being of the community by ensuring that both domestically produced and imported products adhere to international standards and legal mandates. We achieve this through rigorous inspection, certification, and testing processes,” Tekie explained.

He added that ECAE offers demand-driven services nationwide and operates branch offices in Djibouti, Lamu Port in Kenya, and Port Sudan, where products imported into Ethiopia are inspected.

ECAE’s radiation testing laboratory examines over 16 different packaged food products, animal products, water and soft drinks, and agricultural products to ensure they are free from harmful radiation before reaching consumers, he noted.

“Our goal is to support both domestic and international trade by providing accredited management system certifications for products and services. These certifications are recognized globally, enhancing the acceptance of Ethiopian products,” the director elaborated.

ECAE serves as the first reference satellite laboratory among COMESA member states and collaborates with five international conformity assessment institutes, including SGS, Bureau Veritas, and Cotecna, to certify products under various modalities.

The biochemical testing laboratories include food and beverage testing, chemical and mineral testing, agriculture and agricultural inputs testing, microbiology testing, and radiation testing. The electromechanical testing facilities cover electrical, mechanical, textile, stationery, leather, and packaging products.

Products are certified after thorough evaluation, with ECAE offering product certification services for nine different products in accordance with the international operating system ISO/IEC/17065. Additionally, ECAE provides management system certification based on ISO/IEC 17021, including quality management (ISO 9001:2015), environmental management (ISO 14001:2015), occupational health and safety management (ISO 45001:2018), and food safety management (ISO 22000).

ECAE also offers ISO 9001:2015 quality management system certification for local producers and service providers.

## Commissioner says Nat’l Dialogue crucial...

gathering in Harari State was a resounding success. “Participants not only echoed the voices of those they represented but also demonstrated respect, patience, and unity. The Commission values their efforts and expresses its gratitude.”

Moreover, he acknowledged the significant contributions of the participants to the well-being of society and the nation through their peaceful discussions, bringing the concerns of the people to the table.

The Commissioner also mentioned that ENDC has officially received the agenda collected from Harari State. He assured that

the agendas gathered from all states would be presented at the main National Dialogue council, where the government is expected to implement them as promised.

“Our ancestors guided the nation with respect and sacrifice. We must follow in their footsteps and fulfill our responsibilities,” he remarked, adding that Ethiopia is a naturally gifted nation with much to offer the world. However, the inability to resolve differences through dialogue has hindered its progress.

Tegegnetwork emphasized that the path forward and the meaningful exploitation of the nation’s resources lie in the peaceful

resolution of challenges, with the National Dialogue playing a pivotal role in this endeavor.

Participants also expressed optimism about the National Dialogue, hoping it will address the country’s significant challenges. They look forward to its successful realization, which they believe will answer the society’s major concerns.

Religious institutions, political parties, government bodies (executive, legislative, and judiciary), influencers, and various institutions have submitted their agendas to the ENDC, it was learned.

## Currency swap: Emerging tradition...

Notably, Ethiopia and the UAE have joined this movement, implementing a mutual currency payment system expected to mitigate the dollar’s influence on their economies. BRICS also announced the commencement of dialogues among member states to establish an alternative currency exchange system that could replace the US dominated SWIFT system.

This evolving financial landscape poses both challenges and opportunities. As more countries explore alternative payment systems, it could reshape global economic dynamics, potentially offering new avenues for financial stability and equity, Economists told *The Ethiopian Herald*.

The emergence of cross-border transaction ‘currency swap’ would be a monumental opportunity for Ethiopia to gain easy access to forex though it could cause potential exchange rate risk if mismanaged with contexts, according to a political-economic analyst Lawrence Freeman.

He said that the world’s financial system is dominated by the old-guards though the system is causing bankruptcy. “What we are seeing especially during the past decade, is the emergence of the Global

South and this is led by China.

Despite the propaganda by European Union or others, China is outperforming in every economy over the world. So, the world has now multiple directions and multiple polarities that the US dollar will no longer dominate, he opined.

The BRICS and some other regional collaboration institution are coming up not to control the economy of countries which is unlike to the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. If the BRICS succeeded with its developmental goals, the global financial landscape, including the currency are likely to be improved.

BRICS has its own bank which can impact based on the argument of sovereign nations. Their exchanges with currency swap may cause slow but incremental move against the US dollar domination. Sovereign nations establishing trade and currency relations could affect the US dollar led financial system as well, according to him.

He, however, warned if such policies are being implemented just for the sake of non-developmental projects. Hunger and poverty are most critical issues that Ethiopia and Africans should work

while economically cooperating with international organizations, he highlighted.

The commencement of such monetary operation will create an enabling playground for the financial ecosystem, believed Economic Policy Analyst, Costentinos Berhutesfa (PhD).

Currency swap can stimulate the financial industry and reduces the cost of borrowing in foreign currency. Ethiopia’s currency swap agreement with UAE may help to address perennial problem of sequencing policy reforms and to make a robust economic cooperation between the two parties and a source of foreign investment and development finance, he stated.

Credit and capital markets should be well-developed to nurture enabling environments for the currency-swap. “Unlike any other financial instruments, currency swaps will possess several limitations, notably ‘narrow liquidity’, which makes it difficult to enter or exit a swap agreement at a favorable rate,” Costentinos said.

Also, given the complexity of currency swaps, some financial institutions may find it difficult to use it effectively, he pointed out.

# Opinion

## Restoring historical, legal access to seaport of Ethiopia

BY GETACHEW MINAS

Historically, Ethiopia used to have its own seaports in its eastern part bordering the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden. It has shared a unique relationship with Djibouti immediately after the latter became independent from its former colonizer. The two countries used to have geographic proximity, economic interdependence and historical ties. Though Djibouti is a small country located on the Horn of Africa, it has a critical role to play as a port city serving Ethiopia.

However, Ethiopia has become a landlocked country, after the independence of Eritrea for more than three decades. As a landlocked country, it has become dependent on neighboring countries for its international maritime trade. It has heavily relied and still relies on other countries' seaports for conducting international trade. Both countries (Ethiopia and Djibouti) have economic interdependence on global maritime trading. Experts have pointed out that Ethiopia uses the Port of Djibouti for most of its imports and exports. This renders the port a vital gateway for the economic operation of the country.

Records indicate that the two countries have a long-standing agreement which enables Ethiopia to use the port facilities. Huge investments have been made to enhance the transportation infrastructure between the two nations. Moreover, there is a close linkage between the two countries in the supply and use of water and electricity, which is an essential aspect of their economic relationship.

The two countries also share cultural and historical ties, which serve as a cornerstone for their joint economic development. Both have socio-cultural inter-linkages with many ethnic groups and languages crossing their borders. The people of the two countries engage in border trade in which they exchange goods and services without limitations. Their social relationship has been mostly stable, with cooperation in various areas. The two countries have been sharing security along the borders to promote marketing, business and economic development which are linked to port activities.

The two countries have maintained friendly diplomatic relations that facilitated port services. They have been working together on regional issues, particularly those related to the Horn. They are also members of regional organizations such as the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). This organization promotes regional cooperation and integration among its member states with the aim of improving the welfare of all citizens in the region. It works through the program areas of trade, industry and tourism, and infrastructure development.

Thus, the two countries have collaborated to implement these programs and on other several major infrastructure projects.

These include the Addis Ababa–Djibouti Railway, which has drastically improved transportation facilities that helped in boosting trade between the two countries. These facilities have contributed to the economic development of the two countries.

Despite strong ties, there have been occasional challenges, such as disputes over port usage and tariffs. However, these issues have generally been resolved through diplomatic channels. Their relationship is now a model of cooperation in the Horn of Africa, benefiting both countries economically and politically.

As pointed out earlier, being a landlocked country, Ethiopia does not have direct access to a seaport. Most countries in the Horn of Africa have access to the sea without any hindrance. Ethiopia, however, depends on its neighboring countries for access to international maritime trade. As indicated earlier, it has favorable treatment from Djibouti when accessing its seaport. The two countries have significant historical connection as Ethiopia used to have direct access to the Red Sea in previous decades.

The port of Djibouti is the primary gateway to the sea, handling the vast majority of Ethiopia's import and export traffic. The highway networks connect Ethiopia with the port, facilitating its international trade. Ethiopia has been exploring alternative sea routes and ports, including the port of Berbera in Somaliland. The development of this port and its infrastructure may diversify Ethiopia's outlet to the rest of the world.

Experts have revealed that Ethiopia has shown interest in the Kenya's Lamu Port. Also, South Sudan-Ethiopia Transport Corridor project may provide another outlet to the sea through Kenya. All these efforts indicate that the country is seeking sea outlets for its expanding trade at a global level. Those countries that own seaports would have, therefore, to compete in reducing tariffs and improving quality of maritime services. These services include effective and efficient delivery of imports to and exports from Ethiopia.

There are several benefits that accrue to landlocked countries using seaports of neighboring countries. Efficient seaports contribute to the economic growth of any country using them. Access to international markets through ports is very important for Ethiopia's trade. It facilitates the import of essential goods and the export of products like coffee, textiles, and agricultural goods. The seaports, therefore, contribute to the economic growth and development of the country.

Ethiopia is also in a position to diversify its trade routes using the seaports of neighboring countries. By using several and multiple seaports, Ethiopia can reduce its total dependency on a single access point. It has several options to improve its bargaining position, which may contribute to tariff reduction. Alternative use of multiple ports may enable it to reduce risks associated with geopolitical tensions. It

is known that there are political tensions among the neighboring countries of the Horn, making smooth trading a difficult one. Countries using seaports may also face infrastructure failures that negatively affect the economic operations of landlocked countries, including Ethiopia.

Ethiopia may benefit from efficiency of seaports through lowered costs of operations. Efficient access to the seaports may lower the cost of imports and exports, making Ethiopian products more competitive in the global market. As costs of imported inputs increase, the local production of goods and services become more expensive.

Similarly, with rising input prices that are used for the production of exports, global market competition becomes intense. This may contribute to reduce capacity to earning foreign exchange. In this regard, the role of efficient production and maritime services are crucial in facilitating competitiveness of exports from Ethiopia. This is crucial for developing the country's economy with the objective of integrating it into global supply chains. This is facilitated productively through efficient access to the seaports which the country is using for its import and export trading. Competitive use of these ports is an important maritime strategy of Ethiopia.

Other benefits of access to ports include economic development and employment generation. There are infrastructural projects that have direct linkages with port services. Railways and roads are built between the ports and the hinterland of Ethiopia, especially the urban areas. The railway sub-stations along the way create market centers for passengers and commuters who buy local goods and services from the domestic traders.

Similarly, bus sub-stations also serves as small markets for passengers. These sub-stations create employment and income for people residing in that part of the country. Both the railway and the roads promote and contribute to the generation of employment along the way. Another strategic benefit is the partnership created by collaborating with neighboring countries for port access. Ethiopia strengthens its regional ties with the neighboring countries and fosters economic cooperation. These extend to fostering broader security matters between the riparian countries.

Among the benefits of accessing a port are economic growth, infrastructure development, revenue generation, strategic and security benefits, and cultural and social exchange. A port promotes economic growth through trade facilitation by serving as passage for global trade by enabling the import and export of goods. It stimulates economic activity by providing access to global markets. Port activities create employment opportunities in logistics, shipping, customs, and other related industries.

Ports usually lead to the development of

infrastructure in the surrounding areas. These include roads, railways, warehouses, and all types of transport network. The formation of an inland port may contribute to the growth of urban areas, with the development of housing, commercial centers, and other amenities. Ports generate revenue for the government through customs duties, port fees, and taxes on goods and services.

The growth of port cities may lead to improved education, healthcare, and other social services for people residing near and around them. Moreover, ports allow entrepreneurs to have access to offshore resources. They enable them to engage in the production and use of oil and gas, contributing to energy security for the country. Ports also stimulate the introduction of technologies from other countries. They contribute to the advancements in logistics, shipping, and maritime industries.

The availability of a port services may attract investors in different industries within the country such as Ethiopia. This leads to the creation and development of industrial clusters that improve labor productivity and technical innovation in the country. Ports are doors for new tech that contribute to economic growth and development. As Ethiopians become skilled in these techs they would be in a position to produce goods and services for both domestic and export markets. These exports from Ethiopia require ports that are efficient and effective in the delivery of the required services.

It is on record that export activities through the ports bring in foreign exchange, which strengthens the economy of a country. A port may be a strategic national asset for the defense of a country, enabling the rapid deployment for military equipments and weapons. In cases of national emergency, a port may facilitate the import of emergency supplies. It is also used for the supply of equipment into the country in the event of natural disasters.

Other social benefits of ports include cultural and social exchange between neighboring and other countries. It enables the smooth travel of people and flow of ideas, thereby fostering cultural exchange. It also contributes to the development of tourism in Ethiopia by facilitating movement of tourists.

Also, port cities contribute to social and economic development among people frequenting its services. The port services that facilitate trade, import and export are essential instruments for earning foreign exchange. As mentioned earlier, Ethiopia may maximize its foreign exchange earnings by exporting its agricultural outputs to the international markets through the ports in an effective and efficient manner.

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

# Editorial

## Ethiopia's quest for sea outlet historical, justifiable

As Ethiopia's goal of securing its own sea access is historically supported, justifiable and achievable the government will also remain committed to realize the feat of reclaiming the country's access to the sea through legal and peaceful means.

It is with this stance that Foreign Affairs Spokesperson Ambassador Nebiyu Tedla reiterated Ethiopia's commitment to pursuing sea access while resolving diplomatic disputes with Somalia peacefully. "It was once taboo to discuss this issue, but now almost all countries, including Türkiye and Somalia, recognize the legitimacy of Ethiopia's quest for sea access," he stated. "This is a significant achievement for Ethiopia, and we will continue our pursuit through non-violent means to preserve regional peace and stability."

Indeed, as a matter of fact that sea outlet is key for countries to build their economic and political capacity, and in this era of economic and political competition, where mighty states are crossing a long distance from their borders and deploying their armies around the coasts and expanding their interests; it should never be considered strange for Ethiopia to raise the question for sea access located only about 60kms away from sea coast. And it is essential to remind those who are attempting to obstruct this effort to pull back their hands.

Myriads of reasons are on the table for Ethiopia to seek sea outlet under its full administrative right that include its large population which makes it the second largest in Africa; its fastest growing economy with bulk import and export trade and its ambition for mutual growth with the countries in the region among others.

As the Horn of Africa is known for political turmoil and unrest, Ethiopia's role in stabilizing the region is attested repeatedly via deploying its peace keeping army. In the case of Somalia, for instance, Ethiopia takes the lion's share for its not only being stabled, but to appear as a sovereign state. Ethiopians have paid a lot of price in life for Somalia since it was being stateless fighting against terrorists that lasted to date.

Coupled with its desire to build strong and stabled economy; the above mentioned reasons justify Ethiopia's quest for self-administered seaport is legitimate. Besides, article 69, sub-paragraphs one to five, and article 125, sub-paragraph 1 of the United Nations Water Law state that landlocked countries have the right to equal use of the natural resources of the sea in their vicinity.

Based on this, Diplomacy and Political Science scholar Yisihq Fikru recommend that the question of ownership of the Ethiopian sea outlet should be explained in accordance with international law in a peaceful and diplomatic way.

Fortunately, after months of diplomatic tension, Ethiopia and Somalia are close to resolving their dispute over the bilateral port deal signed on January 1st between Ethiopia and Somaliland. And Türkiye receives gratitude for its initiated mediation to address the diplomatic dispute though the final outcome remains uncertain.

Reaching on peaceful agreement benefits not only Ethiopia and Somalia, but the whole region as the countries in the region are interconnected in many ways. On top of deploying its troops for peace keeping in the region, Ethiopia is playing remarkable role in connecting the neighboring countries with electric power and transportation infrastructure. Owning seaport, thus, empowers Ethiopia remain strong state in the region contributing highly for its political, economic and social advancement. To this end, Ethiopia calls the countries in the region and abroad to support its legitimate access to the sea.

On the other hand, some strange movements that have potential to threaten its peace and security are observed in the region. Ethiopia does not allow such movements that risk its interest and want to remind those forces to think over and handle the matter wisely.

The international community also should recognize Ethiopia's justifiable and achievable quest for the sea outlet and stand by it for its diplomatic and peaceful accomplishment.

# Opinion

## When young Africans innovate...

Robot-building fun is spreading far and wide with young people aged 8 to 18 from 14 African countries expected to take part in the World Robot Olympiad (WRO) by the end of the year. Behind this continent-wide push to up skill young Africans lies a team of partners - Google, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the Camden Education Trust and Irish Aid - on a mission to foster innovation, policy support and cooperation in CS (Computer Science) and STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics) education across the continent.

Announced during the African Business Forum (ABF), their current plan is to engage over 9,000 students in WRO competitions over the next few months.

...*They realize Africa's economic potential*

Rewind to early 2024: the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and Google signed an agreement to support digital transformation in Africa focusing on four collaboration tracks: Digital Skills Development, AI Policy Research, Cyber security & Content Responsibilities, and E-commerce and Digital Trade. As part of its mission as one of the United Nations' five regional commissions, ECA fosters region wide partnerships that promote economic and social development, intraregional integration, and support international cooperation for Africa's 54 Member States. Among key priorities for ECA's human capital development is bridging the digital divide, particularly among young women and girls, to build essential digital and STEAM powered skills.

On his opening address during the partnership signing ceremony on the margins of the 2024 edition of the Africa Business Forum, H.E. Claver Gatete, Executive Secretary at ECA, noted that "the potential of Africa's digital economy is enormous. However, realizing this potential rests on closing critical gaps in digital skills. We must find workable answers to critical questions, such as how do we bridge the gap for the 650 million workers that need to be trained or retrained in digital skills by 2030." ...*They acquire skills for life*

For future skills to match the ecosystem for quality jobs, particularly in AI, African students need an arena to apply their skills and explore what lies beyond the 'good enough' horizon. This is where the fun and challenge factors brought in by global competitions steps in.

Together, partners selected the World Robot Olympiad as a trusted non-profit framework to achieve their goals, taking young African learners to the next level of CS learning fostering digital, creative and problem-solving skills every step of the way. According to the WRO annual report, WRO participants code for roughly 65 hours before a regional event - and many more for national and international events! Research conducted by WRO Germany also says that 79% of competing students develop problem-solving skills. Competing on a global stage alongside teams from all corners of the world is also a great way for young people to celebrate their achievements nationwide and continent-wide.

...*They solve real-world problems*

When students compete, they face real-world problems that require creative and innovative local solutions. They become more inquisitive,

research independently, solve problems, learn to work with others and strive to do more than is required. They reach the next level of learning to think logically, test their thinking in teams, learn to present their research, and be creative and resilient - quite a priceless portfolio in the future workplace where workers are to solve increasingly complex challenges and socio-economic equations.

"Google is honoured to partner with ECA and Camden Education Trust to upskill over 9,000 young students in AI, robotics, and coding, fostering their participation in the World Robot Olympiad (WRO) global competition", says Charles Murito, Regional Director Government Affairs & Public Policy for Sub-Saharan Africa. "Our objective is to unlock the potential of African youth and provide young innovators with the opportunity to create a better world through technology. We acknowledge the dedication of local teachers, educators, NGOs, and departments of education for making this program a reality."

This year, students' mission, should they accept it, is no smooth sailing: ethical, societal, environmental, and legal waves will be theirs to navigate as they dive deep into this year's "Earth Allies" theme and investigate how robots can help us live in harmony with nature.

...*Educators and entire nations are inspired and transformed*

While some countries like Nigeria and Zimbabwe are already chanting their homecoming heroes, more teams of young innovators are currently forming and gearing up towards their national competition in 14 countries. After several days of technical fun and intensive team work, winning teams are selected in each country. But that's not it: some of the winners will be traveling to Izmir, Turkey, on November 28, 2024 to compete on the global WRO stage with winning teams from each of the 90 participating countries.

The Camden Education Trust is the third partner actively supporting the digital skills component of the ECA-Google Partnership agreement. This not-for-profit company with Charitable Status based in Ireland is bringing its Continuing Professional Development (CPD) expertise and best-practices for scaling education projects into the equation.

While such competitions are a great way to foster intra-African cooperation in STEAM education, the Google-ECA agreement also aims to institutionalize the latter in each participating country.

Hence the Continuing Professional Development program developed by partners to onboard educators and equip them with the robotics materials and skills they need to organise the national WRO competitions in their own country. As partners scale this CPD across Sub-Saharan Africa, they also engage with governments and education systems to secure policy support for CS and STEAM education from policymakers.

Who's next on the WRO agenda? Ethiopia. Partners are currently working with STEM power to train over 600 youths in robotics across the 40 STEM centers located in Addis Ababa and other regions ahead of the national WRO competition.

Source: UNECA



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The Ethiopian Herald

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

# Art & Culture

## How can Africa make optimal bounties out of creative artistic boom?

BY MEKDES TAYE (PHD)

These days' narratives are admitting the accumulated potential of African culture, art and heritage in the world. It is the land of precious and indigenous way of living and identity that is culture. Researches showed that the African population rate is figured as the youngest population in the world. If one million is the registered number this number gets turned in to 8 million by every month. This inurn recalls the logical saying that is this generation demanded industries that are creative and entertaining in their content than other forms of styles in the given artistic industry.

Till recent years African cultural and artistic potentials were almost ignored and their benefits were hidden for centuries. But since 2013, the industry had started showing some inspirations in various ways. As the senior fellow at the African Center and the Atlantic Council, Aubrey Hruby, words heard as "the interests in media entertainment space since 2013 have allowed the window of the world to be held in our hand every single days and proliferations of smart phones." This increase in the application of smart phones which makes things very easy and simple to connect with the world boosts the requirement of data to be fed to these technologies. Thus, as the speaker said it, in order to find that raw data, the plat forms start paying for the source in various ways. Here is her say, "Google and Facebook are investing a ton of money in to connectivity to the region. So the undersea cables that are running to the region are funded by Google funded and by Facebook that are expanding broadband capacities. This is to mean that because of the increased digitalization and modernization, the generation is progressively connecting with each other than before easily.

In these phases the creative industries are sophisticating and increasing in their content and approach which in turn touches the economy of the continent. Some pessimists say that the continent is not getting any benefit from the booming industry. But this is not real as Aubrey Awofisayo (Head of Music Sub-Saharan Africa YouTube) said it in the conference which was cohosted by Webinar. "But in the market of the region a film or a song is a non-rival good so that that is a very dorky way of saying rather it can be consumed domestically and internationally." She had referred the Nollywood of Nigeria as an example. She said researches showed that the country had got from 2 billion to 8 billion today. Thus it is playing a remarkable impact on the economy of the people of Nigeria. As the woman detailed it this benefit is aside from the beneficiaries that are involved in the production process. The actors, hairstylists, promoters, producers, camera and video camera specialists and the like got paid in the industry.

Regarding music the continent is viewing a promising increase in local and international collaborations of artists with others in the



globe. Grammys and various collaborative ties like African-American, transatlantic and the like combinations uplift the industry very much. Concerts in the region and across the globe are interestingly prepared and consumers to such events are progressively increasing in and outside Africa. This had still an immense effect on the economic boom of the region. The fellow researcher said that "these things became a vector of African soft power in addition to economic growth. So it is a lot about rebranding the content and the content is starting being seen differently." The presenter did believe that the region had a greater tangible potential for taking a great share of the economic growth.

Sarah Wittmeyer (IFA) argued in this as, "Creative cultural industries are a strong driver for economic and societal innovation. An integrated approach of civil society arts and the economy for the culture and great industries which include creativity cooperation and transnational plat forms for the exchange of our central parts of international cultural relations as we understand them." The boom in the artistic creativity is the best way to connect with the world through various plat forms. The central issue discussed inside the creativity did show the status of the society and such plat forms did a lot in the process of the given society's nobility. Thus as the presenter said it "Participation, ownership and capacity building are in this context central aspect of cooperation."

According to Sarah Many African countries cultural and creative industries are supported by EU member states and the European Union as a whole to foster development and international cultural exchange.

Technological advancements and progressively disseminating smart phones for mostly youngest generations are the biggest opportunities to the region. Money these days is hugely flowing in those entertaining sectors like fashion, music, film and the like. In the conference which gathered specialists form the art and culture of the continent Laureen Kouassi (Founder and CEO Birimian Ventures) reflected the following idea. "Money could flow on those industries especially fashion, but the question is; are our players are very fragile.

So many concerns shouldn't be in the money rather should be on the kind of support to the entrepreneurs because the move is to transform the designers and the artist in to entrepreneurs. Thus the debate should be on capacity building." This speakers point is in order to increase the economic benefit of the region; the biggest concern need be taken on the process of enabling the industry to create spaces and opportunities to be designed by creators themselves. What should be prioritized is enhancing the capacity of these creators to create new opportunities. This, I agree that, is the base for making money out of the industry away from the artistic fascination. The process by itself can create job opportunities which do mean a lot on the societal and economic change of the people.

Addy Awofisayo (Head of Music) was another speaker to the conference. She had raised an idea that concerns on how to be sacksful in using the artistic boom economically. She said, "Monetizing the talent and the content that the creator had is very important for the creators to achieve economically. That is it can be through advertising or through brand deals."

Whether the creator is using Facebook, tick talk, Instagram or twitter, the important thing is to be able to monetize his or her skill and the content. Monetization did mean that the creator can be smart enough to entertain the audience with music, film, or fashion or any other forms of artistic styles so that the approach can recall many viewers and can be successful in having more income that way.

In our country Ethiopia, too some successful creators are appealing the audiences in various sets. That way these creators are grasping the attention of certain advertisers. This is another opportunity to use the plat form for making money. Thus they are generating or they are actually contributing to the economy.

The other speaker Yolanda Ncokotwana (Acting Head of Industry Development NFVF) was the next speaker to forward her comment on the raised issue. For her the biggest challenge that the continent commonly encountering is the absence of formalizing and professionalizing the art space. She raised the experiences of film industries of South Africa. She said that the

problem of monetizing was the dominating problem next to the problem which is mentioned under that she has noticed in the industry. Here are her words, "when we are getting in the room as a business people and we need to sit in the table and talk structured deals in terms of if you invest, this is what you get. This is what you get in return and I think what we have missed is the language of being able to sort of speak to corporate businesses or speak to private and equity investors is how do you then package yourself in such a way that you are not just talking about art but you are actually making them be able to see the growth and the potential and just talking from the national film and video foundation point of view."

This insight is very important for the efficacy of the industry in the countries of Africa. Adoring, respecting, valuing and encountering it as a work need to emanate from the artist itself. The artist or creator need to approach the clients in a formal and professional way so that the industry can ran as smoothly as possible with greater respect and cooperation thus the economic reward follows naturally.

The last speaker was Rokia Traore (Singer, Songwriter, guitarist and founder of foundation Passarella's). She believed that in order to use the artistic boom economically, the continent needs to make an organization. "To make the artistic boom something positive for the continent, we need to start an organization. It helps to have spaces where to give this positivity to professionals. In a specific profession the first thing to learn is an environment where you can practice, develop and enhance your abilities. Optimal environment for any skill also includes the possibility for skilled workers to sell what they produce and the streaming craze is for sure advantageous for African art and culture."

In Ethiopia too there are artists and creators who did encore the equivalent benefit from their artistic work. But there are also many skilled, talented and creative artists who get at the periphery from the scope of the economic reward. The major problem or challenge as some of them saying when some media outlets approached them is the absence of any responsible body to look for them. They had the skill, but they don't have the access and means to reach out the client and audience. That is what the speaker mentioned it 'streaming'.

The conclusion is the continent is viewing a drastic change and increase in the area of art and culture. Plat forms are becoming very sophisticated and complicated at the time for creators and artists to get blurred in coping up with them. Thus, being effective and get alerted on those plat forms and contents is very important. In order to succeed as a continent formalization, professionalization, structuralization, monetarizing, forming organizations and cooperation are very important to be adhered as the panelists remarked in the conference.

# Law & Politics

## Ethiopia's valid security concerns on post ATMIS Somalia

BY EYUEL KIFLU

The African Union Support and Stabilization Mission in Somalia (AUSSOM) is poised to take over from the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS) on January 1, 2025, marking a significant shift in the peacekeeping landscape for the war-torn nation. While the details of AUSSOM's size, composition, and operational scope remain undisclosed, the transition is already sparking debate and raising concerns, particularly for neighbouring Ethiopia.

The African Union Peace and Security Council (PSC) has approved the Concept of Operations (CONOPs) for AUSSOM, acknowledging the progress made in Somalia's security and political landscape while recognizing the persistent threat posed by Al-Shabaab. The PSC has also commended the sacrifices made by ATMIS personnel during their tenure.

However, Ethiopia, a close ally of Somalia, is expressing caution regarding the deployment of AUSSOM. The country is concerned about the potential for foreign actors to exploit the mission under the guise of peacekeeping, particularly given the presence of countries like Egypt, which have struggled to pacify their own regions, seeking to participate in AUSSOM.

Ethiopia's concerns are rooted in the complex geopolitical dynamics of the Horn of Africa. The country is wary of any external forces that could destabilize the region, especially those with vested interests in Somalia. The Ethiopian government is calling for a careful and strategic approach to the deployment of AUSSOM, emphasizing the need for a thorough vetting process for participating countries and a clear mandate for the mission.

Therefore, the Ethiopian government's call for careful consideration of the deployment of post-ATMIS forces in Somalia is crucial.

According to Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) the AU and the United Nations must ensure careful deployment of the post- ATMIS forces in Somalia to prevent unnecessary and unexpected regional tensions, taking relevant Security Council resolutions into account.

MoFA has also expressed concern over the upcoming deployment of peacekeeping forces in Somalia. As a neighboring country and a key contributor to regional security and stability, Ethiopia is closely monitoring the situation.

During his bi-weekly briefing, MoFA Spokesperson Ambassador Nebiyu Tedla emphasized that the countries currently contributing to the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS) are important stakeholders and should be consulted on future missions.

Regarding Egypt's interest in deploying its army to Somalia, Ambassador Nebiyu



stated that while Somalia, as a sovereign nation, has the right to enter into bilateral agreements with any country, Ethiopia will not compromise if its national security is threatened. The spokesperson also reiterated Ethiopia's commitment to resolving all diplomatic disputes with the Somali government peacefully.

In an exclusive interview with *The Ethiopian Herald*, Befikadu Bogale, a researcher at the Institute of Foreign Affairs Horn of Africa (HoA), expressed Ethiopia's concerns regarding the deployment of a peacekeeping force in Somalia following the conclusion of the African Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS) mandate.

While African Union's (AU) acknowledging the patronage and the willingness of Djibouti and Egypt to contribute troops, Befikadu emphasized that this does not necessarily mean these countries will be entering Somalia. He highlighted Ethiopia's national security concerns stemming from the threat posed by Al-Shabaab, stating that Ethiopia, as a sovereign nation, has the right to protect its sovereignty without seeking permission from any external entity.

"If any threats arise from Somalia, Ethiopia has the right to take necessary measures," Befikadu asserted. He further clarified that Ethiopia would not wait for Al-Shabaab to cross its borders but would act preemptively to defend its interests, similar to its intervention in 2006.

Regarding the potential entry of Ethiopia's regional adversaries into Somalia under the guise of peacekeeping, Befikadu expressed a degree of scepticism. He pointed out that these entities, including Egypt, have struggled to pacify their own neighbouring countries, which have been embroiled in turmoil due to various factors. "There is no need to exaggerate the entering of these entities, even if they manage to enter Somalia under the banner of peacekeeping," he cautioned.

Befikadu concluded by emphasizing

**Ethiopian soldiers bring a unique advantage to the table: their familiarity with both the geographic region and the tactics employed by Al-Shabab. This intimate knowledge is crucial in effectively countering the militant group's operations**

Ethiopia's commitment to utilizing its diplomatic channels to engage with the AU and other relevant parties on the deployment of a peacekeeping force in Somalia after the ATMIS mandate expires. Ethiopia will actively participate in discussions to ensure the security and stability of the region while safeguarding its own national interests.

The transition from ATMIS to AUSSOM presents a critical opportunity for Somalia to achieve lasting peace and stability. However, it is crucial that the international community, particularly the African Union, addresses the concerns raised by Ethiopia and other stakeholders to ensure that AUSSOM is a force for good in Somalia.

Also, the transition from ATMIS to AUSSOM presents both opportunities and challenges. While the new mission aims to build upon the successes of its predecessor, it must also address the evolving security threats and political complexities in Somalia. The success of AUSSOM hinges on the commitment of all stakeholders, including the Somali government, the African Union, and the international community, to work together to ensure a stable and peaceful future for Somalia.

Somalia continues to grapple with the unexpected and persistent attacks from the militant group Al-Shabab, which has significantly impacted the country's stability. In response to this on-going threat, it is imperative for Somalia to enhance its counter-terrorism capabilities and work towards creating a peaceful environment for its citizens.

In this regard, Ethiopia, a neighbouring and brotherly country, has been playing an indispensable and undeniable role. Ethiopia's involvement is particularly noteworthy in the context of the newly established African Union Support and Stabilization Mission in Somalia (AUSSOM). The presence of Ethiopian troops within this mission is highly commendable.

Ethiopian soldiers bring a unique advantage to the table: their familiarity with both the geographic region and the tactics employed by Al-Shabab. This intimate knowledge is crucial in effectively countering the militant group's operations. The bravery and expertise of Ethiopian troops are expected to significantly contribute to accelerating Somalia's journey towards stability.

# The national seed regulations, laws positions Ethiopia as hub for seed trade

Dr. John Mukuka

BY GIRMACHEW GASHAW

*The COMESA East African Community Horticulture Accelerator Program (CEHA) Ethiopia National Chapter was launched recently with a vision to drive sustainable growth and development in the horticulture sector across the COMESA and East African Community (EAC) regions.*

*The Ethiopia CEHA national chapter is expected to serve as the central hub to coordinate, catalyze and accelerate horticulture development in Ethiopia, with particular focus on the three anchor value chains; potato, avocado, and onions.*

*COMESA's interest is in establishing regional clusters to enhance investments by government institutions and the private sector. Harmonizing policies and standards, facilitating access to capital and opportunities, and meeting market demands for products like avocados are key priorities. Empowering women and youth within CEHA is crucial for economic empowerment and quality improvement.*

*CEHA in collaboration with its national chapter aspires to contribute to increasing e export trade among African countries in horticulture products. This will assist in fulfilling the ever-increasing agricultural demand for increasing demand for agricultural products regionally and globally.*

*Today's Guest Dr. John Mukuka is the Chief Executive Officer of Alliance for Commodity Trade in Eastern and Southern Africa (ACTESA). During a brief stay Dr. Mukuka had with **The Ethiopian Herald**, he explained the activities of the COMESA, the importance of launching the CEHA Ethiopia National Chapter he avowed the readiness of ACTESA to further reinforce its commitment in the effort to accelerate Ethiopia's horticulture transformation. Have a nice read!*



## How do you explain Alliance for Commodity Trade in Eastern and Southern Africa?

The Alliance for Commodity Trade in Eastern and Southern Africa (ACTESA) was launched on September 24 2008 by the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA)'s Ministers of agriculture. On June 9, 2009, ACTESA was established by the Heads of State of COMESA (the COMESA Authority) as a Specialized Agency to integrate small farmers into national, regional and international markets.

On March 1, 2010 ACTESA signed an agreement with COMESA on the implementation of agricultural programmes in the region. The agreement is meant to accelerate the implementation of regional initiatives in agriculture, trade and investment.

Key areas of focus assigned to ACTESA include the development of regional agricultural policies; promotion of investment in agriculture; promotion of trade in agro commodity products and

**The main goal of ACTESA is to increase farmer productivity and incomes in the Eastern and Southern Africa region through trade in strategic agricultural commodities**

development of production and marketing structures; development of the agricultural, livestock, pastoral and fisheries sectors and consultation with the private sector and civil society organizations on agricultural development matters especially agro-commodities trade.

The main goal of ACTESA is to increase farmer productivity and incomes in the Eastern and Southern Africa region through trade in strategic agricultural commodities.

ACTESA is the answer to the region's agricultural challenges that include trade related constraints, low productivity, technological and policy related constraints. It is an important institution in a region where 85 percent of all staple crop producers are smallholders and of these, only about 15 percent produce for the market and are characterized by poor organization with no predictable selling mechanisms.

ACTESA responds to the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP)'s Pillar II and III agenda, that seek to improve rural

infrastructure and trade-related capacities for market access and increase food supply, reduce hunger, and improve responses to food emergency crises respectively.

Consequently, ACTESA is the primary agency for achieving the COMESA vision of increased regional integration and improved competitiveness of staple food markets, leading to broad based growth and decreased food insecurity.

The COMESA Secretariat, through ACTESA, aims to transform the agricultural industry in the region, doubling or tripling its value in the next 10 years. This growth will require coordinated efforts in infrastructure, labor systems, and employment opportunities for women and youth. High-value fruits and vegetables are positioned to be more profitable than cereals, meeting the increasing demand for domestic and export markets.

**Could you please explain to us the benefits of CEHA?**

Within COMESA, we have over 12 institutions that coordinate and implement

*continued to page 9*



# The national seed regulations, laws ...

*continued from page 8*

programs for the common market. We have the Trade and Development Bank dealing with banking in Africa, as well as the Yellow Card Insurance.

We also have institutions like Comfort that focus on women and youth. The launch of CEHA in Ethiopia is critical to contributing to the growth of the horticulture sector in Ethiopia.

The benefit of CEHA is for the horticultural industry within the COMESA member states, which is currently valued at about 4 billion US dollars. With the launch of CEHA in Ethiopia, it has the potential to triple the horticultural industry within the next 5 to 10 years.

The benefits extend to the private sector and the 90 million small farmers in COMESA areas. They will have access to planting materials, markets, and regional labor systems. This is a significant benefit for the Ethiopian Ministry of Agriculture, the private sector in Ethiopia, and both smallholder and commercial growers.

I want to thank the government of Ethiopia for holding a sensitization workshop on COMESA-aligned national seed regulations and laws, which were approved by parliament. This positions Ethiopia to become a hub for seed trade. One of the critical companies I want to work with is Irish Potatoes, which are already on the COMESA catalogue, facilitating easier movement of potato varieties. Ethiopia has already harmonized seed laws and regulations, making it a seller of crop diversity. This will be crucial for producing cultural products with CEHA to ensure the best genetic materials and market access.

**As the leader of the renowned Alliance for Commodity and Trade in Eastern and Southern Africa, what is your organization currently doing?**

ACTESA targets geographical areas within Eastern and Southern Africa that include a larger number of vulnerable populations but also have the potential to produce surplus staples for the market.

The target beneficiaries from these areas are farming communities in selected areas that are drought prone, emerging from conflicts, or otherwise vulnerable and may or not be receiving support from food assistance programs to improve their production systems.

By creating ACTESA, COMESA Member States showed commitment to ensuring that food assistance and other types of food security interventions in the region are development oriented and promote sustainability of food security among target beneficiaries.



The Alliance for Commodity and Trade in Eastern and Southern Africa (ACTESA) is leading the regional facilitation and coordination of CEHA in five countries. We have already launched CEHA in Ethiopia and plan to do so in Tanzania, Rwanda, Uganda, and Kenya. Our role is to coordinate the catalytic potential of CEHA in these countries, including facilitating the signing of MOUs between the Ministry of Agriculture, Agriculture Association of Ethiopia, and ACTESA.

**How will you facilitate trade in these countries that are planning to implement CEHA?**

ACTESA facilitates the regional harmonization of agricultural industry standards, including SPS standards, CD standards, and market access standards. We will also work towards implementing CEHA and a regional leveling system to ensure that products like Irish potatoes, avocados, and onions meet regional standards. This will enable them to have the same CEHA level and access regional and global markets

**Regarding the quality and quantity of**

**products, what is your organization doing to address these issues in African countries?**

We are implementing capacity-building programs to improve the quantity and quality of products. We will also train the private sector on quality standards to meet regional and global market demands. By ensuring that products meet CEHA standards, we aim to increase exports and meet the demands of markets like Europe.

CEHA will provide opportunities for landowners with less than one hectare of land to profit from high-value crops. The focus on high-value fruits and vegetables will benefit both domestic and export markets, ensuring quality standards are met. This will boost the economy and benefit consumers in Europe and other markets. I wish the best for the project and look forward to its success.

**What challenges has your organization faced in implementing these initiatives?**

One of the main challenges has been the low capacities of countries in producing Onions, Avocados, and Irish Potatoes. We

are working to increase capacity through training and facilitating access to funding for growers who want to expand. The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation provides funding for private entities participating in CEHA.

**Why are you focusing on only three products?**

Focusing on three products allows us to maximize our potential and capacity strategically. By starting with three products, we can gain experience in production, labor systems, and value chains for export markets. This will help us expand to more products in the future. Funding will also be allocated to improve infrastructure at borders to ensure the quality of exports.

**Can you share best practices from countries implementing CEHA?**

CEHA will open up opportunities for the African free trade area by expanding labeling requirements to cover 24 member states of the African Union.

**How does CEHA and the African free trade area relate?**

The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) creates a single continental market for goods and services in Africa. It further aims to reduce trading problems such as different regulations from one African country to another.

CEHA will pave the way for the African free trade area by setting minimum labeling requirements within commercial member states. This will eventually expand to cover 24 member states of the African Union, creating a building block for trade across Africa.

**Thank you for sharing this information. Is there anything else you would like to add?**

I am pleased on behalf of ACTESA to mention the significant work done by COMESA institutions in the last 15 years, the Division of Gender, and the Institute of Climate Change among other institutions. The upcoming ministerial meeting in November will focus on aligning decisions with CEHA to streamline processes. I will present any critical recommendations from Ethiopia to ensure swift action.

We are excited about the private sector-driven implementation of CEHA, with support from the public sector. We look forward to the positive transformation and impact of CEHA in the COMESA and EAC region, transcending to the global level.

Thank you.

**It is my pleasure.**

# Society

## Consistent and persistent actions to improve women's lives



BY STAFF REPORTER

“What is more heartwarming and fascinating than seeing citizens, who were once suffering from social distress and economic misery, and living in multidimensional poverty, reinvigorating their hopes? What feels as deep pleasure and fabulous as watching them their faces glowing and their eyes sparkling with revitalized hope and determination for their perspective on life has changed from worse to better and their future has become promising?”

This was stated by Mayor Adanech Abiebie while expressing her joy on the eve of the graduation ceremony of the first batch of women sheltering at ‘Lenegewa’ Women’s Rehabilitation and Skill Development Center and took.

‘Lenegewa’ Women’s Rehabilitation and Skill Development Center was established five months ago by the Addis Ababa City Administration with the aim to transform the lives of vulnerable women who were commercial sex workers and those compelled to lead life in the street.

During the inauguration ceremony of this state-of-the-art rehabilitation center which has an intake capacity of 2,000 women at a time, it was stated that it would provide a holistic approach to empowering destitute and socially disadvantaged women. Disadvantaged women will be empowered through receiving the necessary vocational education and skills development training, ranging from beauty courses that cover topics such as hairdressing, makeup, nails, and skincare to fashion and textile, babysitting, woodwork, food preparation, and other similar areas.

Concurrently, they will be provided with psychological counseling services to alleviate psychological distress and help them to get speedy recovery from their trauma and boost their emotional resilience thereby making them self-supportive citizens.

Currently, it seems that the Rehabilitation Center is fulfilling its dream of lessening the burden of those vulnerable segments of society through providing them with life skills and vocational training.

By equipping those women with the skills and knowledge needed in the labor market,



Graduation ceremony at ‘Lenegewa’ Women’s Rehabilitation, Skill Dev’t center

it is enabling them to lead a better life. Recently, the center graduated the first batch of its trainees in the presence of the Mayor of Addis Ababa City Administration Adanech Abiebie, Deputy Mayor and Head of Industrial Development Bureau Jantirar Abay, and other guests.

The graduates are the first batch since its establishment in March this year, it was learned.

Speaking at the graduation ceremony, Mayor Adanech said that the Center has proved that it is possible to bring about change in a short period by addressing major social problems. In this respect, the Women’s Rehabilitation and Skill Development Center is playing a vital role in repairing the fractures in society.

Mentioning that the graduated trainees have been supported to get out of their dire living conditions by offering training and psychological counseling, for the past four months in five departments, and 18 professional fields, she said that the Administration will continue its support in their next moves.

According to her, the City Administration has prepared sheds and other materials that are crucial for the new graduates to start their own businesses.

The Mayor also thanked those kind-hearted individuals, who stood by the side of the City Administration and played irreplaceable roles for the dream become a reality.

“Once again, on behalf of the graduates,

I would like to thank all kind-hearted investors who stood by the side of the Administration so that we can carry out people-centered activities that kindle a glimmer of hope in those people and build a city where social justice reigns. This is just the beginning; we still need to improve the lives of many destitute women who are suffering from a number of social and economic fractures. So, I would like to call on all stakeholders to strengthen your cooperation,” she urged.

She also congratulated graduates of the first batch of the ‘Lenegewa’ Women’s Rehabilitation and Skill Development Center. “I would like to congratulate all graduates of the Center who are filled with glittering hope, happiness, and ambition, and entrust you to be role models for others by being successful in your professional field,” she added.

As per ENA, the trainees graduated after meeting the requirements and the passing grade of the Certificate of Competency (COC). Of the total 302 trainees who took the training, 94 percent passed the Certificate of Competency (COC) and qualified for graduation, it was learned.

While speaking at the inaugural ceremony of the Center five months ago, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) also underscored the significance of the center in addressing the challenges of women.

The center will have a paramount meaning in mending national fractures by transforming the livelihoods of vulnerable

women and building their skills thereby enabling them to contribute to the efforts to realize the prosperity of the nation. “This project is an exceptional endeavor among all the projects we have undertaken in Addis Ababa thus far,” he remarked.

‘Lenegewa’ Women’s Rehabilitation and Skill Development Center, which lies on 10 ha of land and is located in Akaki Kaliti Sub City, provides a wide range of services to rehabilitate livelihoods and transform the skills of vulnerable women in the city and the country at large. The center can take in 10,000 impoverished women at a time and it comprises skill development hubs, psychological consultancy, mental health service facilities, training centers, and recreational quarters, it was learned.

It is known that the Addis Ababa City Administration has been undertaking various activities targeting to improve the lives of the disadvantaged segments of the city; thereby making the city where every resident leads an enjoyable and satisfying life.

The Administration has been reconstructing dilapidated houses of the poor, sharing meals during holidays, and putting food on the tables of students among others. In turn, it was possible to address social problems and bring about change in the lives of several households. The establishment of the ‘Lenegewa’ Women’s Rehabilitation and Skill Development Center has also this same motive- enabling vulnerable women to become self-reliant through providing vocational and life skills training.

# International

## FAO draft report backs growth of livestock industry despite emissions

Experts say the UN's food agency has shied away from recommending less animal farming, though cutting methane emissions is a quick way to curb warming

The livestock industry is essential for food security and economic development, according to a draft report by the United Nations' Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) that reinforces its defense of practices in the emissions-heavy sector in recent years.

Former and current FAO officials and academics have criticized the document, seen by Climate Home News, for pro-industry bias, cherry-picking data and even "disinformation" about the environmental impacts of animal farming.

The FAO told Climate Home that a final version of the report – part of an assessment consisting of various documents – would be launched in 2025 and that conclusions should not be drawn from the draft text at this stage.

Estimates of livestock's contribution to greenhouse gas emissions vary, ranging from 12%-20% of the global total – mostly in the form of methane from ruminants like cows and sheep, and carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) released when forests are cut down for pasture.

Methane, which is emitted in cow burps and manure, is a short-lived greenhouse gas that is 84 times more potent than CO<sub>2</sub> over 20 years, making it one of the few available levers to prevent climate tipping points being reached in the near term.

In a 2024 survey of more than 200 scientists and sustainable agriculture experts, about 78% said livestock numbers should peak globally by 2025 to start bringing down emissions and help keep global warming to internationally agreed limits.

But the FAO's draft study offers strong support for growth of the sector, saying livestock's contributions to food security, nutrition and raw materials for industry make it a "linchpin for human well-being and economic development".

It is also described as "critical" for food security, "crucial" for global economies, and "indispensable" for development in sub-Saharan Africa.

The report will be submitted to the FAO's agriculture committee, which has 130 member nations, although the text could change as national representatives thrash out a final version.

Private-sector lobbyists participating as advisors in national delegations are sometimes also able to influence texts under discussion, according to a July report by the Changing Markets Foundation.

One FAO insider, who did not want to be named, told Climate Home the draft FAO report had been "biased towards pushing livestock [with] many national interests behind it".

The FAO receives around a third of its budget in direct donations from member countries, and the rest in voluntary contributions from the same states and other actors, including businesses and trade associations.

### Tech fixes

The 491-page draft report, which was overseen



by a scientific advisory committee of 23 experts and peer reviewers, does not assess how diets with more plant protein could improve food security.

One advisory committee member, Professor Frederic Leroy of Vrije Universiteit Brussel, told Climate Home a shift to entirely plant-based diets "would severely compromise the potential for food security worldwide because many of the food nutrients which are already limited in global diets are found in livestock. How much you can move (away from livestock) should be the real investigation."

The report's analysis assumes rising meat production as demand surges among a growing world population with higher incomes. In this context, it proposes "expanding the (livestock) herd size", increasing production through intensified systems, better use of genetic techniques, and improved land management.

"Technological innovations" such as feed additives and supplements to suppress methane are another idea backed by the FAO. Those could include experimental methods such as a vaccine announced last week and funded by a \$9-million grant from the Bezos Earth Fund that aims to reduce the number and activity of methane-producing microbes in a cow's stomach.

The report's findings, once approved, will be fed into a three-part roadmap for bringing agricultural emissions in line with the Paris Agreement goal of limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

The first installment, published at the COP28 climate summit, was viewed internally by some FAO experts as a generic placeholder who largely followed an industry-friendly agenda.

One ex-FAO official, who requested anonymity, told Climate Home the latest draft report on livestock ploughs a similar furrow and would set expectations for part two of the 1.5C roadmap.

"The reality is that if they do a (nearly) 500-page report and put 23 experts' names in front of it, it's to impress you and say: 'This is what is going to happen. We're going to defend the sector'," the former UN official said.

### Making the case for meat

The expert added that the study's panel was skewed toward intensified livestock systems and had "cherry picked" evidence to justify recommendations pointing in that direction.

Several of the report's advisory committee members have previously advocated for meat-based diets, and 11 of the study's contributors work for the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI), including one of the paper's committee advisors.

According to the ex-FAO official, ILRI "has been pushing intensified livestock all its life. It's their identity. It's what they do."

The institute co-founded an agribusiness-backed initiative – Pathways to Dairy Net Zero (P2DNZ) – which de-emphasised livestock emissions, framing them as just one of several problems for the industry to tackle. ILRI did not respond to a request for comment.

Shelby C. McClelland, of New York University's Center for Environmental and Animal Protection, told Climate Home she was shocked by a repeated claim in the draft FAO report of "a lack of consensus among scientists regarding the contribution of livestock to global greenhouse gas emissions".

"This downplays and outright ignores overwhelming scientific evidence from the IPCC [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change], high-profile papers, and other recent studies," McClelland said. "A statement like this in a supposedly scientific and evidenced-based review by the UN FAO is alarming given their influence on agenda-setting for global climate action."

Advisory committee member Leroy countered that it was "dangerous" to talk about a scientific consensus when the metrics used to measure methane compared to other greenhouse gases are constantly evolving.

"This should be part of an open and transparent debate," he added. "I don't think we have reached consensus on the way we interpret the effects of livestock agriculture on climate change, the degree of it, how we can measure it and how we can deal with it."

Scientists at the FAO first alerted the world to the meat industry's climate footprint when they attributed 18% of global emissions to livestock farming in the seminal 2006 study, *Livestock's Long Shadow*. This analysis found that, far from enhancing food security, "livestock actually detract more from total food supply than they provide."

However, the paper sparked a backlash felt by key experts in the agency's Rome headquarters, as the FAO hierarchy, industry lobbyists and state donors to its biannual \$1-billion budget exerted pressure for a change of direction.

By the time of last December's COP28, the FAO's stance had shifted so far that two experts cited in another livestock emissions study called publicly for its retraction. They argued it had distorted their work and underestimated the emissions reduction potential from farming less livestock by a factor of between 6 and 40.

### No 'carte blanche'

Guy Pe'er, a conservation ecologist at the German Centre for Integrative Biodiversity Research and the Helmholtz Centre for Environmental Research, accused the FAO of turning a blind eye to widespread "hyper-intensive grazing practices" and land use change caused by the world's growing number of mega-farms.

"We're currently using more land to feed livestock than humans, and that is causing rapid deforestation in Brazil. Ignoring that is outrageous. When an official organisation is producing disinformation like this, I find it extremely irresponsible," he said.

Leroy told Climate Home that different types of livestock farming should not be conflated. "If you have over-grazing and the pollution of water sources, that's clearly wrong, but other types of animal agriculture are also net-positive [for the environment]," he said.

If the advisory committee "sees advantages in having livestock agriculture as part of the food system, I think there's a sound scientific basis to assume that," he added. "It doesn't mean that it's *carte blanche* or 'anything goes' at all."

# Verbatim and Caption

## Ethiopia to plant 600 million seedlings on August 23: PM Abiy

On 17th August 2024, Ethiopia plans to plant 600 million seedlings in a single day. By participating in this historic day, every Ethiopian is expected to put his/her finger print planting seedlings.

With a sense of national spirit, Ethiopians from all corners of the country should stand together to stamp their finger prints on the Green Legacy. If we stand together, we can even achieve more. Adults are expected to plant more than 20 seedlings and teenagers more than 10 during the day.

**Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD)**



## Addis Tomorrow Special Economic Zone showcases city's future vision: PM Abiy

The "Addis Tomorrow Special Economic Zone" is a showcase of the future vision of Addis Ababa. The Addis Tomorrow Special Economic Zone, a public-private partnership development project includes residential houses, malls, commercial centers, and other service providing institutions. The project is part of the government's development works to make Addis Ababa beautiful. This and other similar ongoing development projects will alter the look of Addis Ababa and make it more livable.

Work is the only path to realizing our dreams; our sole political ideal is dedicated to work. Thus, we have initiated the construction of the Addis Tomorrow Economic Zone, which will showcase the future vision of our city.

**Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) said while launching "Addis Tomorrow Special Economic Zone"**



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**FDRE Government Communication Service**

## Adherence to constitution, its institutions core principle of Pretoria Agreement: GCS

The fundamental principle of the Pretoria Agreement is adherence to the constitution and its institutions. The National Election Board of Ethiopia (NEBE) has recently issued registration of certificate to TPLF as a political party in accordance with the amended election proclamations number 1332/2016 article 2 (1).

It said the government accepts and commends decisions made by constitutional institutions based on legal and institutional freedom. The TPLF lost its legal status following the decision made by NEBE based on the Proclamation of Political Parties' Registration and Code of conduct. The Board passed this decision due to TPLF's involvement in violent activities. TPLF has to respect the constitution, laws, federal institutions and other constitutional institutions as outlined in the Pretoria Agreement article 7 (1) stressing the need for TPLF to operate by complying with the country's political party registration laws and NEBE's mandate.

Hence, the issue of TPLF's legal status should be resolved only through the existing pertinent laws and the procedures of NEBE with respect to the Pretoria agreement.

**The Government Communication Service (GCS) statement**



## This year's 40 percent plantation to be conducted along the GERD basin: DPM

40 percent of this year's Green Legacy planting cycle will take place in the basin areas of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD). This year's Green Legacy planting campaign is unique as 40 percent of the target plan is set to be planted along the Nile Basin.

Ethiopia plans to plant 7.5 billion tree saplings for this year's planting cycle. The initiative is important to maintaining the Nile River and the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam at a higher capacity.

**Deputy Prime Minister Temesgen Tiruneh**

## Ethiopia always committed for peaceful mechanisms to secure sea access: Spokesperson

Ethiopia is committed to advancing its legal and diplomatic efforts to get access to the sea. Ethiopia is grateful for Turkiye for facilitating the bilateral talks held between Ethiopia and Somalia in Ankara.

Ethiopia will actively participate in the third round of talks to be held between the two countries. Efforts are underway to avoid unnecessary confrontation with regards to access to the sea.

**Ambassador Nebiyu Tedla, Spokesperson, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia**

