



Kemal Abdurahim

University advances researches to utilize mineral resources

BY YESUF ENDRIS

ADDISABABA - Assosa University is spearheading research initiatives aimed at utilizing the abundant natural resources in the region, the university's president disclosed.

In an interview with Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporate, President Kemal Abdurahim highlighted the untapped potential of the area's mineral assets such as gold, marble, copper and coal as well as agricultural resources including arable land, and extensive bamboo and mango plantations.

The university is focusing on modernizing the mining and agricultural sectors to exploit these resources. "Our goal is to facilitate the transition from supplying raw marble to producing refined marble products," Kemal explained.

He emphasized the university's commitment to research-driven projects and training programs for youth engaged in mining.

University's Natural Science College Dean Tadele Daniel (PhD) expressed that the university's efforts extend beyond resource extraction. "We are also training miners to reduce the environmental impact of mining chemicals," he said.

According to him, geology students are participating in a practical field experience thereby gaining skills that are directly applicable to the industry.

Ethiopia has been reforming policies and bureaucratic processes to attract foreign investors and to modernize mining over the past years. The Mining Council has been formed and put into action to ensure that projects started in the sector are completed on time, according to Ministry of Mines and Petroleum.

Expert encourages harnessing spirulina to combat child malnutrition

BY MESERET BEHAILU

ADDIS ABABA - Ethiopia should leverage the widespread use of microalgae, specifically spirulina, to foster a generation that is both mentally and physically robust, according to a leading researcher.

Addis Ababa University College of Natural Sciences lecturer and prominent microalgae researcher Habte Jebesa (PhD) emphasized the necessity of effectively utilizing spirulina to nurture a well-developed populace.

In an interview with the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA), the scholar highlighted the critical role of microalgae, rich in diverse proteins, in combating child stunting and fostering overall growth.

"Ethiopia's conducive environment for microalgae production should be fully utilized to scale up spirulina production," he asserted. The academician further stressed the importance of providing nutrition to children up to 33 months to prevent stunting, which significantly hampers the country's productivity.

The Spirulina Research and Production Center, affiliated with the Institute of Bio and Emerging Technology, has confirmed the success of spirulina research over the



past three years. The researcher also noted that spirulina is highly valued worldwide for its ability to prevent mental and physical impairments.

Microalgae seeds developed at the research institute are proving beneficial in producing nutritious food for children. Despite environmental challenges, microalgae thrive, offering essential nutrients even in eroded lands. Habte pointed out that over 90% of the nutrients needed by humans can

be found in microalgae, which are rich in carbohydrates, proteins, minerals, fats, and vitamins.

Although awareness of microalgae existed in Ethiopia four decades ago, lack of attention led many scholars to leave the country. However, recent governmental focus has placed Ethiopia on the path to becoming an international spirulina producer. The researcher called for greater private sector involvement to enhance production efforts.

Ethiopia's macroeconomic reforms set to attract competitive investments

ADDIS ABABA -The macroeconomic reform policy which Ethiopia has embarked on has created a great opportunity for competitive investment in the country, Indian investor Mayur Kothari said.

Speaking to ENA, Chairperson of Indian Mohan Group PLC in Ethiopia, Mayur Kothari stated that the full implementation of Ethiopia's macroeconomic reform policy has created a competitive investment opportunity in the country.

Noting that his company was eagerly waiting for the macroeconomic reform, the chairperson stated the reform is crucial for the manufacturing sector.

The reform policy is vital to manage the economy, increase export trade, attract investment, and boost foreign currency earnings, he elaborated.

Moreover, the macroeconomic reform will reduce the foreign exchange rate gap between the black market and banks, the investor said, adding this measure will alleviate the shortage of foreign currency facing the manufacturing sector.

Kothari cited the lack of foreign currency as an obstacle for launching new projects for his company, and he stated that the reform policy will be instrumental in bridging the previous gap.

It will also boost export trade, increase farmers' revenue worth of their labor, and



Mayur Kothari

achieve equitable economic benefits, the investor elaborated.

The reform would also lure new investment flows, create jobs, and enable technology transfer, making significant contributions to fostering fast economic growth.

The policy also offers key investment incentives as Ethiopia's market potential is huge, the businessperson remarked.

Over the next four years, the full-scale implementation of the macroeconomic policy is expected to register economic

growth of eight percent on average and raise foreign direct investment (FDI) to eight billion USD.

The implementation of the policy will also reduce the inflation rate to 10 percent, increase the share of tax revenue to 11 percent of GDP, reduce the share of government debt to 35 percent of GDP, as well as raise export and import trade to 20 billion USD and increase national reserve deposits to more than 10 billion USD, it was learned.

NBE holds foreign exchange auction after macroeconomic reform

BY STAFF REPORTER

ADDIS ABABA – Some 27 banks participated in an auction held for the first time since the liberalization of the forex market two weeks ago as part of government's macroeconomic reform, the central bank of Ethiopia announced.

Announcing the conclusion of the special foreign exchange auction result yesterday, the National Bank of Ethiopia (NBE) expressed

that 27 banks were participated in the auction that held yesterday valuing one US dollar with average rate of Birr 107.9.

Transactions made under the auction are reflected in the Indicative Daily Exchange Rate posted by the central bank on August 8, 2024.

NBE is seeing a substantial narrowing of the gap between bank exchange rates and parallel market rates over the past week, as well as meaningful progress towards exchange rate

stability, according to the announcement released by the central bank.

"This is precisely what our macroeconomic reforms intended to achieve—namely to ensure that most FX transaction activity can shift to the banking system, thereby helping both exporters bringing in foreign exchange as well as the many companies and entrepreneurs seeking foreign exchange," NBE Governor Mamo Mihiretu said in the statement the bank posted on X.

The Governor also appreciated the encouraging growth seen in the volume of FX transaction noting that growing number of banks are making foreign exchange available to their customers by approving past import requests and accepting new import requests.

"We anticipate and indeed expect more banks will follow this trend over the coming weeks and that they will do so with increasingly larger FX volumes," the governor reportedly said.

CSOs shoring up...

The Authority for Civil Society Organizations (ACSOs) held its 11th Federal-Regional Joint Council meeting on Wednesday, bringing together federal stakeholders and city administrations.

In an interview with *The Ethiopian Herald* at the sideline event, Dire Dawa City Civil Society Organizations Finance and Economic Development Bureau Director Simenesh Alemayehu reported that 69 CSOs are operating in health, education, disability support, women's empowerment, and youth services.

These CSOs are managing a budget of 1.8 billion USD and have created permanent and temporary jobs for 98,000 people since 2012. Additionally, CSOs with a registered capital of 38 million Birr are supporting elderly people, engaging in diplomatic measures, and addressing social affairs in the recently concluded period.

Simenesh emphasized the pivotal role of CSOs in reaching areas beyond the government's capacity, ensuring the community benefits in various ways. Her bureau is collaborating with the federal government to sustain these benefits.

The Somali State Finance Bureau Deputy Head Muhedin Abdi noted that 127 CSOs are implementing their initiatives in different areas within the state. Among these, 35 are international, 68 are national, and the remaining are local organizations, collectively managing 3 billion Birr.

The deputy head praised CSOs for being the voice of the voiceless, helping forgotten and unsupported citizens in various ways, including moral building, job motivation, and providing essential healthcare services.

Muhedin also stressed that, despite past developmental challenges due to a lack of emphasis, the Somali State government, in collaboration with the federal government, is making significant strides to address these issues, particularly in bridging infrastructure gaps.

It is noteworthy that over 5,700 CSOs are actively engaged in constructive activities across Ethiopia, with 700 being international organizations.

Ethiopia's Forex...

essential commodities such as petroleum, fertilizer, and other necessary consumption products.

According to Eyob, this shift positions the country correctly on the map, as it has long been operating under significant distortions with many forex-related issues. Despite market-determined rate and devaluation speculation, the state minister asserted that the latest reform is essential for balancing the forex market. Furthermore, Ethiopia has restructured domestic debt, including pension funds and the Treasury bill market, in terms of timeline rather than stock restructuring.

"The biggest GDP with a higher population in the region, Ethiopia's economy has long been defined by critical forex shortages," Eyob said. He projected that Ethiopia would become a beacon of prosperity in the continent, aiming to be a middle-income country in the coming years, showcasing the development trajectory in Africa and how transformation happens within a generation.

Planning and Development Minister Fitsum Assefa (PhD) added that the leadership is implementing sustained macroeconomic policies aimed at achieving continuous growth and ensuring citizen benefits. The

government's Homegrown Economic Reform Policy addresses challenges such as low domestic revenue and foreign exchange earnings, minimal project execution, policy setbacks, limited private sector engagement, and low employment opportunities.

According to her, the first phase of the Homegrown Economic Policy implementation addresses challenges like low domestic revenue and foreign exchange earnings. The policy prioritizes effective government expenditure, enhanced investments, and timely project completions.

Through rigorous research and thorough discussions, the government managed to mitigate potential challenges and pressures of the development programs. By restructuring short, midterm, and long-term measures, it was possible to manage price instabilities, increase production and productivity, and support lower-income wages.

The minister emphasized that the macroeconomic reform is expected to reduce economic vulnerability, promote social development, and alleviate poverty. The government is also increasing wages for civil servants and strengthening safety net programs to support low-income earners.

Institute...

regional integration amongst the Horn of Africa nations through providing scholarship opportunities.

Every year, the institute graduates students who received Ethiopia's scholarship opportunities in various disciplines, according to Biruk.

So far, students from South Sudan, Sudan, Somaliland, Somalia and others have used the opportunity, he mentioned.

The Director General pointed out that the institute is not only a teaching center to Ethiopia but also the hub of TVET center in the region.

It is providing scholarship opportunities to facilitate regional collaboration beyond training the students and recruiting competent citizens, he indicated.

"We have been providing this scholarship opportunity for the last five years for aforesaid nations and we believe that our training program would bring huge impact in the lives of many Ethiopians and some neighboring brothers and sisters," Biruk said.

Federal TVET supports and follows up public and private TVET training institutes located nationwide while producing human resource via recruiting trainers and create competent and self-reliant citizens to contribute to the economic and social development of the country, thus improving the livelihoods of many Ethiopians.

Apart from this, the institute supplies training inputs and program, new technology and workshop facility in the country, as to him.

"We are working to be exemplary for many other TVET institutes in Ethiopia and Africa. We are not only teaching or training students, but also working with many other regional, national and international organizations to help change the life of many in Ethiopia and beyond."

The institute received ISO 9001:2015 Quality Management System certificate award last Tuesday which is helpful to increase competitiveness, raise visibility, become international institute and attract foreign stakeholders to join hands, it was learnt.

South Korea to conduct...

adding that there may be discrepancies in the numbers. In order to obtain the exact number of veterans, her country plans to conduct research, the Minister said.

"The number we have is 3,518 that we received from our own Ministry of National Defense. But in other countries, for instance, like Greece, they were able to change the number that we have about Greek veterans of the Korean War because the country sent us objective data. So if you send us some data that we can learn from, maybe we can change, tweak, or upgrade the number of Ethiopian veterans."

During her visit with Ethiopia's Minister of Defense, Aisha Mohammed, she discussed ways to strengthen the long-standing cooperation and partnership in the military field between the two countries.

Throughout the meeting, Minister Aisha emphasized the enduring relationship between Ethiopia and the Republic of Korea, expressing her government's strong desire to further strengthen the deep bond between the two nations. She also highlighted the military dedication and bravery of Ethiopian soldiers during their deployment in the Korean War, which she considered a

remarkable achievement that both countries take immense pride in.

Minister Aisha underscored the importance of deepening the long-standing military cooperation between Ethiopia and the Republic of Korea in a way that respects and commemorates their rich history.

On her part, Republic of Korea's Minister of Patriots and Veterans Affairs, Kang Jung-ai, expressed the need to preserve the bilateral history and pass it on to future generations, ensuring that the friendship and historical ties between the two countries endure.

It is worth noting that a memorial wall

engraved with the names of Ethiopian veterans of the 1950-53 Korean War was established in Addis Ababa yesterday to honor their service in supporting the Republic of Korea. An unveiling ceremony for the wall, which bears the names of 2,482 veterans, took place at the Korean War memorial in the Ethiopian capital on Monday, attended by Veterans Minister Kang Jung-ai.

Ethiopia was among the 22 countries that sent troops or medical support to South Korea under the U.N. flag during and after the three-year war against North Korean aggression, which ended in a truce.

Opinion

The Macroeconomic reform accelerating Ethiopia's economic growth

BY ADDISALEM MULAT

It is worth noting that the newly implemented macroeconomic reform beyond a shadow of a doubt will breathe new life into Ethiopia's economy and take the country to unprecedented heights and fresh perspectives. Notwithstanding the fact that the fruits of success cannot be accomplished in an instance, everyone without reference to age, gender, religion and other more of the same should work for the attainment of the goal with one accord and in close association.

For the implementation of the objectives and for the actualization of the goals, everyone without exception should be at the forefront smoothing the path of the macroeconomic reforms.

As putting the macroeconomic reform plays a paramount role in accomplishing unceasing growth and guaranteeing wide-ranging rewards for the general public residing in the length and breadth of the country, they should remove all obstacles in the path of implementing the new policy.

By any means whatsoever, adhering to the old macroeconomic system the county could not help attain the development goals of the nation. However, the newly implemented macroeconomic reform will for sure play a great role in oiling the wheels of the country's economy and attracting investors from every nook and cranny of the world.

In a similar vein, the full implementation of the macroeconomic reform policy through the passage of time will prepare the way for societal development, ameliorating poverty and more of the same. For the sake of truth, afterwards the implementation of the macroeconomic reform, the country managed to collect billions of dollars.

Ethiopia's full-scale implementation of the macroeconomic policy has enabled it to collect a total of over 27 billion USD from various sources, Finance State Minister Eyob Tekalign said, as stated by local media.

He recalled that the government, since the recent past, has revealed commencement of full-scale implementation of the macroeconomic policy with the target to register sustainable growth and ensure inclusive benefit of citizens.

While Briefing the media regarding the implementation of the macroeconomic policy, the State Minister noted that the government has been working with determination to solve the economic, social and political problems of the country. Various reform activities have been carried out regularly to build a stable macro-economy, he elaborated.

Accordingly, Ethiopia's full-scale implementation of the timely and reasonable macroeconomic policy is instrumental in achieving effective operations in all spheres and solving the economic fracture in a sustainable manner.



The reform activities being carried out to take Ethiopia's economy to the desired level are registering achievements, Eyob stated, explaining that the debt relief, resource gained from IMF and World Bank Group, deposit from partner countries, and the currency swap add up to a total of over 27 billion USD. For him, the resources will be utilized for pro-poor oriented activities and for the realization of the initiatives to make Ethiopia one of the middle-income countries.

According to him, all the necessary preparations have been done for the implementation of the macroeconomic reform which is not carried out at once. The reforms that have been carried out in agriculture, mining, tourism and other sectors have created huge capacity to improve the economic fracture.

Highlighting that the economic policy implementation will change the livelihood of citizens, the State Minister added that possible threats related to the implementation have been identified and resolved in advance.

There is no gainsaying the fact that the newly implemented macroeconomic policy will play its part in transforming the lives of the population at large at the earliest possible time. In view of the fact that potential hazards have been discovered and resolved ahead of time, the implementation is expected that it will bear fruit in the course of time.

No matter what happens, everyone should combine efforts or form an alliance with the objective of accomplishing the objectives by turning a deaf ear and a blind eye to hoax news that do not at all reflect the whole thing surfacing at a national level.

Taking the encouraging and favorable prospects the country will witness into consideration, every single one should cross-pollinate positive ideas with the intention of throwing cold water on the efforts of some groups going to the ends of the earth to tarnish the positive moves of the country.

The government has established key strategic directions to ensure the efficient and effective implementation of the macroeconomic reform program. The major policy measures outlined are aligned with our long-term and medium-term national development plans. Additionally, the government will develop robust monitoring

and support frameworks to safeguard Ethiopia's national interests and maximize benefits for our citizens. All relevant ministries and governmental institutions will provide the necessary monitoring and support.

The government is committed to strong leadership in policy reform to maintain consistency in implementation across all relevant institutions, according to the Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD).

It is worth mentioning that Ethiopia has been turning out to be one of the fastest growing economies internationally by attaining vigorous economic progress over the past six years. This being the case, the country has become a noteworthy player in the African economic scenery as well as demonstrated its pledge to attaining sustainable Development Goals.

As the macroeconomic reform policy assists the progress of the overall economic growth of the country in terms of a wide spectrum of sustainable development goals, the new face of the country will be highly exceptional and absolutely gorgeous just around the corner.

As the country plays a part in accomplishing momentous economic challenges, redressing the disproportion, easing the debt burden, and getting higher growth sources in the face of remaining reform ranges, everyone should stand by the side of the government.

In point of fact, in the aftermath of the implementation of the macroeconomic reform, all sections of the population have been throwing around their feelings, ideas and thought in a variety of ways. To get to the bottom of any delinquent that may happen on the heels of the implementation of the macroeconomic reform policy, the federal government is committed to paving the way for social safety nets as well as granting subsidies for low-income workers and fuel prices.

Key objectives and goals of the Macroeconomic Reform Program revolve around correcting foreign exchange distortions and solving the structural balance of payments deficit problems, and reducing inflation by modernizing the monetary policy framework. Apart from strengthening the inclusiveness, competitiveness, and soundness of the financial sector, the reform creates a favorable balance to achieve our national development needs through domestic capacity by solving debt vulnerability and increasing domestic

income, according to sources.

The Government has embarked on implementing sustained macroeconomic policy with the aim of achieving continuous growth and ensuring comprehensive benefits for citizens, Minister of Planning and Development, Fitsum Asefa (PhD) said, according to information obtained from local media.

The Minister gave briefings on Ethiopia's full implementation of macroeconomic reform policy. She noted the dire consequences of economic and development situations which had existed before the country's reform, failing to meet the development goals of the nation, where the government resorted to prepare a Homegrown Economic Reform Policy to reverse the situation.

Low level of domestic revenue and foreign exchange earnings, substandard level of project performance policy constraints and structural shortfalls, inability of the private sector to play a leading role in the economy, low level of production and productivity as well as dwindling employment opportunities were among the major features of the economy, the Minister elaborated.

In order to alleviate this problem, she recalled that the government put in place a Homegrown Economic Reform Program to resolve the challenges and avoid the full-fledged economic crisis the country could have faced.

The government focused on three pillars of the reform program during the first phase of the Homegrown Economic Program implementation which registered concrete results, she said.

As a result, she explained that the financial and fiscal policy sub-sectors of the macroeconomic policy reform and measures taken to modernize government revenue administration and the level of government revenue grew to a much higher level.

Measures taken for effective management of government expenditure, enhanced investments as well as completing projects on schedule with the desired quality have ushered in promising results in major sectors of the economy, Fitsum added.

It is important to note that the macroeconomic reform policy implementation has set in motion moving in the right direction in the face of some challenges that emanate from some entities making an effort to drag through the mud the positive moves unfolding in the left, right and center of the country.

Taking the benefits the general public will secure out of the newly implemented policy down the road, each and everyone should go to the ends of the earth the macroeconomic reform to move in the right direction and attain the sought after goal as soon as practicable.

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

Editorial

Private sector beyond profit maximization

The right time to act beyond getting the most out of sources for the private sector in Ethiopia is now as their active involvement in various sectors would pay off. Since the full implementation of the macroeconomic policy in the nation is of significantly useful in ensuring growth and progress as well as guaranteeing national development by creating unwavering, inclusive and sustainable economy, concerned bodies, all segments of the society and the business community with an atypical reference to the private sector, which would play an overriding importance in helping the government push the recently framed macroeconomic policy into fruition.

True, the aforesaid policy operation supports homegrown reform that will eventually help the country heighten transition to a more inclusive economy. This feasible step in turn would allow the private sector to contribute a more strongly pronounced share to the socio-economic growth at national level. The active engagement of the private sector in due course of strengthening the financial sector, expanding trade options and improving fiscal transparency is really untold and timely. Such a feasible stride taken by the private sector will also boost protections for poor and susceptible households at the time of economic change or radical reform like what is happening right now across the nation.

Basically, apart from working hard for profit maximization, the private sector has to be in a position to help the nation put the policy into effect and stabilize the market. Unequivocally, the private sector is an actor in development, which drives sustainable economic growth by bringing opportunities in value creation. Yes, achieving sustainable development will improve the environment for doing business and building markets connections.

Interestingly, the reform supported by the operation help increase the private sector orientation of Ethiopia's economy by addressing the root causes of macroeconomic imbalances and expanding business dealing opportunities.

The reform would also support a more sustainable and inclusive growth model through modifications to improve financial stability and financial sector competition, increase fiscal transparency, improve public spending effectiveness and the performance of state-owned enterprises, as well as expand social safety.

Furthermore, engagement of the private sector can play a crucial role in fueling the successful implementation of the macroeconomic reform, which can help the country reach its full potential, and many more Ethiopians can thrive. Most importantly, there is a strong emphasis on protecting poor and vulnerable people from the costs of economic adjustment and expanding opportunities for them to participate in the economy.

The policy implementation also helps promote sustainable economic growth, and Ethiopia has embarked on its full implementation as it is instrumental in enabling the nation achieve high and stable economic growth, maintain single-digit inflation, and build a globally competitive economic system. Unequivocally, the full implementation of the policy will establish the prosperity of the nation on firm basis. It is also obvious that the policy will be implemented with the support of IMF, World Bank and other international development partners, and aimed at alleviating foreign exchange market fluctuation and paving the way for a stable economy in the short run.

The best approach on which the nation has embarked is devising mechanisms to reinvigorate the private sector by eliminating structural and operational shortfalls as a process of creating conducive environment to ensure the leading role of the private sector in the national economy. The government is also working towards creating an enabling environment for them to fully engage in the implementation of the macroeconomic policy.

In a nutshell, the various preliminary activities carried out by the government to create a stable national economy are a case in point along this line. The active involvement of the private sector would contribute a lot to the effort geared towards effectively implementing the policy which will make Ethiopia's journey towards prosperity true and affixed on a strong foundation by creating stable, comprehensive and progressive economic development. To make this vision real, the combined efforts of all especially of the private sector is badly needed.



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Opinion

High time to revamp coffee production in Africa

BY GIRMACHEW GASHAW

The Inter Africa Coffee Association (IACO) recently announced the outcomes of the 37th ordinary session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union, which was held from February 18th to 20th, 2024.

During the session, the Kampala Declaration was unanimously adopted to include coffee as a strategic commodity in the AU Agenda 2063 and the inclusion of the IACO as a specialized agency of the African Union.

Prior to the summit in February 2024, the heads of state and governments of the 25 African coffee-producing countries convened for the second session of the G25 African Coffee Summit in Kampala, Uganda on August 8th, 2023, under the theme "Transforming the African Coffee Sector through Value Addition."

Despite the continent being the birthplace of both coffee Arabica (Ethiopian) and Robusta (Ugandan), the sector still faces low productivity, inequality in the value chain, and minimal economic benefits from low domestic consumption.

The decision is huge news for coffee farmers on the continent. It would benefit Ethiopia, as it is among the top African countries in coffee production and land coverage of coffee, contributing 36 percent to the nation's export amount.

With five million households depending on coffee production, exporting the cash crop to African countries using AfCFTA would play a vital role for Ethiopia in enhancing trade destinations.

The G25 Heads of State initiative aims to address infrastructure, taxation, and financial issues by providing an amplified global voice and a unified African stance on global issues. This initiative is expected to enhance regional market access through the AfCFTA, improve logistics, and strengthen infrastructure.

With over 70 percent of African families depending on coffee for their livelihood, it is vital to take advantage of the socioeconomic benefits of the commodity.

Expanding regional integration, creating job opportunities, and engaging in inter-Africa businesses are among the core mandates of the AU. Hence, the decision is a pilot initiative as well as a huge milestone, as the continent has all the resources and can trade through AfCFTA.

Coffee originates in Ethiopia, which is why it is the backbone of the country's economy. Similarly, Uganda also produces Coffee Arabica and Robusta, so it is vital to take advantage of the socioeconomic benefits of the commodity.

It is time for us to take our destiny into our hands and revamp the production of

coffee. We need to mobilize resources, work properly in our industries, transform the value chain, sell value-added coffee, and change the way we do things.

The vision is to transform the African coffee sector through value addition. Conducting advocacy is vital, as political support is crucial to make the decision known worldwide. The politics have not given the commodity the attention it deserves, despite coffee being a half-billion-dollar business and the second-largest commodity in the world. Thus, it needs to be given importance.

Regarding private sector engagement, IACO ratified agreements and came up with a new coffee agreement to allow countries like Morocco and Algeria to join IACO so that Ethiopian coffee can access the market under AfCFTA. This is something we are intentional about to ensure that coffee from Ethiopia and Uganda can access the market in consuming countries.

Ethiopia is the only country in sub-Saharan Africa with a per capita consumption of coffee of about 2/3kg per person, according to him.

The regional Africa Coffee Training Center trains many young and women generations to build their coffee skills.

Adopting coffee as a strategic commodity would allow African countries to have a unified stance on coffee and its market.

Over 13 percent of African countries import coffee, while the continent contributes 12 percent of the product to the world market. Exporting coffee to African markets would benefit not only the producers but also other segments of society in various ways.

Ethiopia exports 99 percent of coffee without adding value, depending on the demand of importing countries. However, with coffee being a strategic commodity, penetrating the African market through AfCFTA would be a win-win, as 13 percent of African countries (Northern African) import coffee from outside the continent. By adding value to coffee, the nation could also benefit by creating a brand and ample job opportunities.

The decision to adopt coffee as a strategic anchor commodity in the AU Agenda 2063 and the inclusion of IACO as a specialized agency of the African Union is a holistic milestone for the African coffee sector and a positive recognition of the important role coffee plays in the socioeconomic transformation of the continent. It is also an acknowledgment that only when we work as a continent, the leverage to address the challenges associated with value addition will be overcome.

IACO is honored to be designated as the AU specialized agency and pledges support to diligently execute the vision of transforming the African Coffee sector through value addition.

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

Business & Economy

Prospects of introducing market based exchange rate regime

BY ABEBE WOLDEGIORGIS

Recently, Governor of the National Bank of Ethiopia (NBE), Mamo Mihretu announced that the currency exchange regime which was run by fixed exchange rate earlier is changed in to demand and supply or market led. The measure is unprecedented and takes the nation to immerse to market economy.

As to Mamo, the measure can be taken as a way out to resolve the existing macro-economic defects such as shortage of hard currency, debt service, inflation, and illegal financial transaction. It also enhances the role of the private sector in the economy.

In fact, temporarily, the new exchange regime may bring some challenges and to overcome the negative consequences, some vital commodities such as fuel, fertilizer, edible oil, and industrial inputs will be subsidized by the government and the salary of low income public servants will be increased.

To increase the supply of basic commodities such as edible oil, child milk and others; investors are allowed to import through Franco valuate without opening of letter of credit in Banks. To manage the parallel market, private foreign currency exchange offices will be operational.

The National Bank's directive allows Ethiopians to open bank account in hard currency and deposit and use it as they want. Banks are also allowed to lend hard currency from foreign Banks. Exporters are also allowed to deposit the hard currency they earn in their own account.

Bereket Fisehatsion is Chief Executive Officer of the Government Investment Administration Department at the Ministry of Plan and Development. As to him, to assess the positive outcome of the newly introduced exchange rate regime, looking the past macro-economic situation is essential. The macro economy had passed through various anomalies and disorder due to many factors. It also had faced structural problems and to resolve the crises, economic reforms were implemented. The home grown economic reform and the 10 years economic development perspective plans can be mentioned as example in this regard. Within these programs, there were sub programs which were prepared to alleviate the shortcomings of production and productivity and improving investment climate.

Among the very objectives of the economic reform was reducing the government debt pressure through fiscal reform. In addition to increasing the nation's currency reserve capacity, making effective the government expenditure accomplishment; making the profit making institutions owned by government efficient and transforming the government finance administration is essential.

As to him, the home grown economic reform comprised vast issues and most



of them are implemented and positive outcomes are registered. The only package which was not implemented was adjusting the foreign currency exchange rate. In the past, the shortage of hard currency inhibited manufacturing industries to import spare parts and inputs. As a result, they were forced to purchase hard currency from the parallel market which again exacerbates the illegal trade. Exporters also were forced to export their agricultural and mining products to the neighboring countries through illegal channel because of unfair price for their products in the local market and the practice critically harmed the nation's foreign currency earning capacity.

The home grown economic reform underlined the value of the expansion of the manufacturing sector because it regards the sector as key sector to create employment for thousands, attract foreign and local investments, substitute import, boost export, create link with agriculture and ultimately to play its role for attaining structural change. But as mentioned above, due to shortage of hard currency, the sector was forced to produce below its average capacity. Hence, the newly introduced exchange rate regime is expected to bring relief to the foreign currency crunch.

Reflecting his view on the role of the market based exchange rate in reducing illegal trade to the neighboring countries, Bereket said that in the market economy the price of foreign currency has immense value and the price should be set by the formal finance system and if it is deviated from such channel, the market will be distorted and manipulated by an identified interest groups which again harms the nation's economy.

In Ethiopia, due to the rampant corruption, it was unable to control and put illegal traders into account. Therefore, strengthening the legal institutions is essential to make the law functional.

He further said that in the past, the currency exchange regime did not encourage manufacturing sectors so that traders were forced to find their way to the neighboring

countries to conduct their export trade.

The hard currency price set by the National Bank was not guided by the principle of market and this again restricted the role of the private sector in the economy. The newly introduced exchange rate regime, however, helps the price of the money based on the market and when this happens, the economy gets a chance to compete with other countries' economy. Manufacturers also obtain better chance to export their products and tap other countries' markets. The exchange of foreign currencies through demand and supply in banks reduces the role of parallel market in the economy and attracts investors to purchase Dollars from Banks formally and encourages the flourishing of formal and modern market system.

As to Bereket, the new exchange rate regime has numerous values to the nation as well as the people and among others, it helps to reduce government debt burden, regulate the foreign currency distribution to be in a justified manner, to utilize the currency in efficient productive sectors, to earn more hard currency, to keep up trade balance and promotes production and productivity. In the middle and long term, it helps economic competitiveness. It also serves to substitute imported commodities by producing locally. It serves to pull more foreign investment and create job opportunities for thousands and stabilize the economy.

As to him, the new currency exchange mechanism considers social groups that would be affected and utilize various approaches to reach them and in this regard, consolidating productive safety net program can be mentioned. In addition, the government will make supervision works on greedy businessmen who set artificial price to maximize their ill gained profit.

He further said that the anxiety witnessed by some segments of the society due to the new development is far beyond the reality. In Ethiopia, about 80% of the population is residing in the rural part of the country engage in sedentary farming and mostly

consume agricultural products produced by their own and their access to imported goods is minimal. Hence, the impact of the new exchange rate on the rural population is insignificant. It is clear that the urban population might suffer from the brunt of the new currency exchange regime and to protect the urban poor, the government will allocate huge amount of budget to subsidize these segments of the society.

According to Bereket, Ethiopia is one of the emerging economies in Africa with abundant natural resources including excessive numbers of productive labor force. Its modern air transport system, mines and tourism sector are conducive for attracting foreign investment but it suffers from shortage of hard currency, foreign debt and unemployment. As a result, it was unable to exploit its resources and relieve from abject poverty. Therefore, the newly introduced exchange rate determined by market forces is expected to bring remedy to the old age economic havocs.

The newly introduced exchange rate system further strengthens the recently introduced home grown economic reform in terms of stimulating the private sector to play a leading role, to open the economy to foreign investors and others. The opening of sectors that have been prohibited to foreign investors such as telecom, logistics, Bank, capital market, wholesale and retail market put fertile ground for the exchange rate to be governed by demand and supply.

As mentioned above, the Ethiopian economy is one of the emerging economies in Africa and it has huge potential to register more development. The already constructed infrastructure such as roads, energy generation plants, clean water and industrial parks have played pivotal role to create employment and boost the economy but the exchange rate system which has been existed for more than half a century was a bottleneck for advancing the economy rapidly and hampered the economy to move sluggish. Therefore, copping the new opportunity to attain economic progress is essential and to that end, stakeholders should play their own part.

Art & Culture

Chameleon imagery in Zimbabwean novel

'Nervous Conditions' (Part Three)

BY MEKDES TAYE (PhD)

In the last two articles I had examined the reflection of sympathy in the novel. In *Nego Feminism*, Nneameka advises African women to walk as a chameleon. In this suggestion what she means is not to dramatize the way and style of its walk but rather use the unique strategy that this lizard uses in its life track. This can be seen in two ways: the strategy that it applies for survival, and the strategy that it applies for gaining its food (which is the life goal of the animal as any animal). These strategies emanated from its special nature and unique traits of the chameleon among others. In this section I am going to associate the nature of chameleon with the characters trait which is deliberately done in order to achieve a certain goal set by them. In this analysis, the traits of the chameleon approached are mainly goal-oriented-ness, cautiousness and adaptability nature of the animal.

In the novel, it was Tambu who exhibited a chameleon nature throughout the novel. Her cautiousness was displayed as follows. The story opens with the protagonist Tambu, feeling nothing on the death of her younger brother Nhamo. The story develops by bringing up her reasons for this an expected and abnormal reaction that no one could not even imagine. "I was not sorry when my brother died. Nor I am apologizing for my callousness, as you may define it, my lack of feeling. For it is not that at all," (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 1).

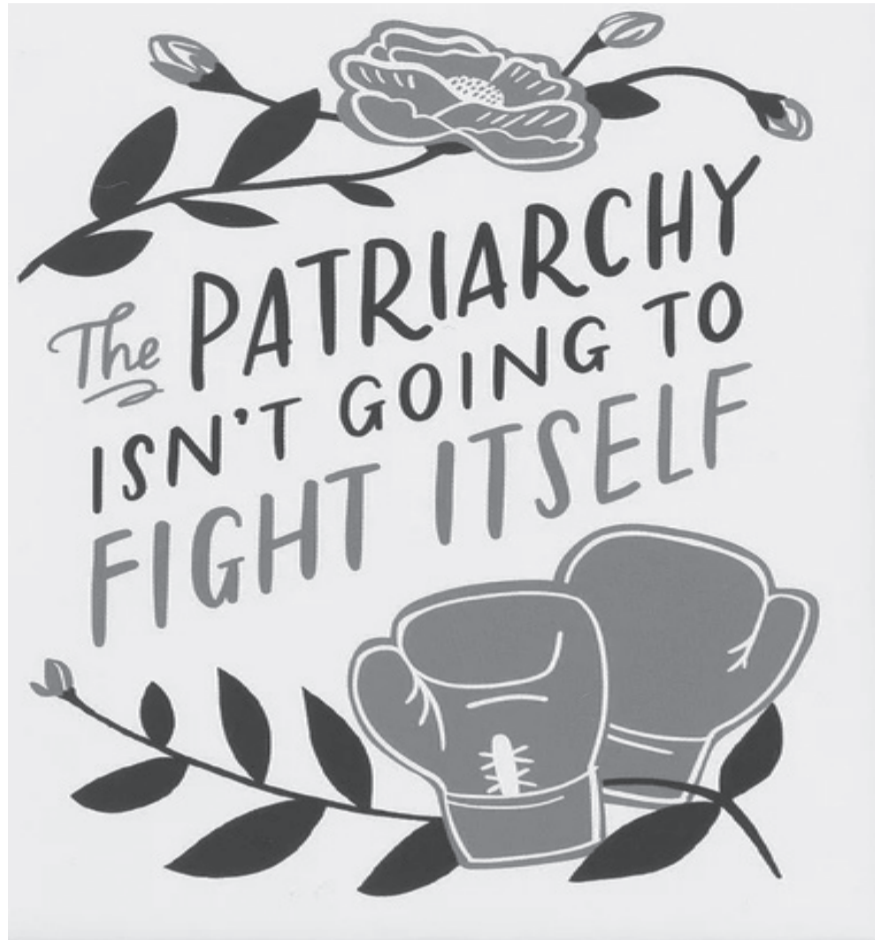
The chameleon does not eat the prey in front of it even if it is hungry. It tastes it by its tongue before taking an action. Even if the death of her brother could make any one to cry and worry, she did not feel anything because of many reasons that she expressed throughout the novel. From this, it can be said that Tambu was cautious and careful in dealing with situations. Before taking any action, she considered it logically. Nhamo was her brother, but he was another patriarch, and the one that had stolen her maize cobs. When he died, she did not feel any sympathy since more than becoming emotional on his death; she cooled down and realized what he had been doing regarding her life.

Tambu was represented as a cautious girl who knows what things are happening around her. This was evidenced in the novel as in: "The needs and sensibilities of the woman in my family were not considered a priority, or even legitimate" (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 12).

This showed that Tambu was very active in understanding her environment as much as she can. Before reacting to any issue that she faced, she always tried to observe the situation carefully from different angles.

It was not only Nhamo who didn't want to see Tambu going to school, but her father too. She narrated this as follows: "He thought I was emulating my brother, that the things I read would fill my mind with impractical ideas, making me quite useless for the real tasks of feminine living" (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 34).

The extract showed that Jeremiah did not



know to what extent the patriarchal system was affecting his daughter and even the society. He mentioned the educated wife of his brother Babamukuru. He believed that the MA holder Miaguru could not serve her husband to have her degree to be eaten. It was only her feminine effort that was important to her husband. For him it was the skill of how to do foods was relevant than having any degree for the husband.

Tambu was not happy with the way things stood following the return of her uncle. She stated this as: "I began to see that the disappointing events surrounding Babamukuru's return were serious consequences of the same general laws that had almost brought my education to an abrupt, predictable end. It was frightening. I don't want my life to be predicted by such improper relations. I decided I would just have to make up my mind not to let it happen" (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 38).

In order to avoid those disappointing incidents, Tambu was conscious on what solutions she should take in order to escape these inadequacies. As the lizard that looked ways of possibilities to pass thorny places, Tambu searched for a way out for the situation that was possibly happening with Babamukuru. This was evident in her words as in: "I would have to confront uncomfortable issues, I busied myself with housework...I was pleased with my efforts" (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 39).

This means that she did not allow herself to be affected by those factors; rather she actively looked a resolution to the problem. In this way, she became stable and could fulfill her goal.

Tambu faced many troubles in her life as the novel depicted. In order to get money for her school fees, she planted maize cobs. When her brother was sent to school, she was supposed to work at home and in the fields. She says:

"the next January my brother entered Standard One. I worked on the homestead, in the family fields and on my own plot" (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 17).

Since she had a goal to be achieved sometime in the future, she did not feel as the one who is forgotten and unable to lead a good life. She knew that this sacrifice was done for a specific purpose. In the future, she was confident that things would be changed. This means that Tambu was a goal-oriented character.

Her brother did nothing for the school fees. He did not even think about it. He was treated well by the family. Tambu noticed that: "He would drink sweet black tea while he read his books, and we went about our chores. This used to amuse my mother" (Dangarembga, 1988, p.9).

Here what made her feel bad was her mother's fascination with the situation. Tambu was not equally treated as her brother. Unlike him, she stayed in the kitchen to cook what the family needed even what her younger brother Nhamo needed. And here was her mom who was happy with the Nhamo's present status. These things made Tambu jealous of her younger brother, and this was another reason for not worrying when he died.

She resisted every obstacle without complaining verbally. Therefore, she was in a good relationship with people around her. It can be said that she was self-motivated in meeting her goal. This would mean that Tambu would be able to support her family in the future. Gender equality then could happen naturally. Nneameka believes that gender equality will be manifested when women became economically independent and participate in measures taken to faster advancement of the society.

Since Tambu was goal oriented, she did her best to find a solution for poverty in her

family. Without entering into conflict with the patriarchal ideology, she tried her best to fulfill her goal. She discussed her plan with her previous schoolteacher. He was the only person who understood her and showed his readiness to help her sold the cobs in town using the school bus. "If you took your green mealies to town," continued Mr. Matimba, 'you might make for a couple of term's fees. After that, we would have to see" (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 24).

Still the girl was sticking on the goal of returning to school. This passion was very important for African women to overcome the problems of unfair gender treatment as the theory proposes. Tambu was in the house of Babamukuru for education after her brother died. She was hoping that the atmosphere in this house would be better. But it was the reverse. She said: "Babamukuru condemning Nyasha to whoredom, making her a victim of her femaleness, just as I had felt victimized at home in the days when Nhamo went to school and I grew my maize," (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 115).

There in her family the basic factor that caused deterrent from her goal was the poverty of her family. But here the problem was the effect of colonialism, as exhibited in Babamukuru. As an educated person Babamukuru was expected to treat women as equally important as men. But he did the reverse. He was very strict in compromising his status with Blacks in general and women in particular. Tambu narrated this in the following way:

"I had thought that issues would continue to be clearly delimited, with Babamukuru, who was as nearly divine as any human being could hope to be, imposing the limits. Through him, because of him, black would remain somber and white permanently clear" (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 168).

Even if Tambu experienced women's exploitation in her uncle's house, she was not irritated by it and did not attempt to run away to her house. She explored the good aspects of this situation. She decided to tolerate the problems for the sake of her education. Unlike her home, here there were good opportunities. For instance, in this house, she was not supposed to stay in the kitchen; she stayed clean and ate good food; she got out to meet people, and she had time for reading her books. She says:

"I performed better there than I had done at home because Baba and Miaguru knew that my schoolwork was important and did not disturb me when I was studying. I could not help being pleased with myself and with the way things were turning out, but it was a wholesome pleasure in living that people" (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 95).

She was not emotional and impulsive unlike Nyasha. She seriously considered everything from different angles. She tried to find the best options that could help her pursue her goal. Thus, she adapted herself to the environment that she was in.

I will be back for its sequel by the next article.

Indepth

Horn of Africa droughts: How a network of groundwater bores could help— study

The Horn of Africa recently suffered its worst drought in almost half a century, and its sixth failed rainfall season in a row.

Fifty million people were directly affected and 100 million more were indirectly affected. About 20 million people risked acute food insecurity and potential famine, 4.4 million required humanitarian aid, and refugees fleeing drought and floods numbered in the hundreds of thousands.

To help solve these problems, the governments of Kenya, Ethiopia, Djibouti, South Sudan and Uganda, and three United Nations agencies, launched the Groundwater Access Facility on 7 May. It aims to develop a plan to extract millions of cubic kilometers of deep groundwater.

I research sustainable development, poverty alleviation and ways to adapt to climate change. This new initiative will focus critical attention and resources on water scarcity in the region. Together with better drought forecasting, this can help the Horn of Africa build resilience against future droughts and promote sustainable development opportunities.

Based on my co-authored research on groundwater in the region, I propose that a strategic network of deep groundwater bores (boreholes) be considered at regional scale to support both acute humanitarian relief efforts and longer term drought resilience building.

The problem

Beyond the humanitarian crises, the recurring droughts in the Horn of Africa cause spikes in food prices, reduce gross domestic product across the region, and intensify insecurity and conflict risk. Recent prolonged droughts have been followed by flooding, which can displace entire communities.

The world's largest population of nomadic herders lives in the Horn of Africa. They make up half the population in some countries. The herders are increasingly chasing rains that never come, or come all at once. Smallholder farmers are also affected and crops fail. Over 40 million people in regional border areas have little or no water infrastructure.

Studies by institutions such as the British Geological Survey, United States Geological Survey and World Bank Group have confirmed voluminous resources across sub-Saharan Africa. Based on our review of this information, we believe a network of deep groundwater bores can work in the Horn of Africa.

Groundwater to the rescue

Groundwater supplies half of all drinking water and approximately one-



Borehole water could solve the Horn of Africa's water supply problems

third of irrigation and industry water in the world. Unlike surface water (rivers, streams and lakes) and shallower aquifers, deeper groundwater resources may present climate resilient, unpolluted and plentiful supplies of water in times of drought.

In the Horn of Africa, studies confirm that deep groundwater is often available in drought hotspots. Recurrent drought hotspots are well-known. Droughts can be increasingly predicted and groundwater infrastructure prepared in advance. Where it is refilled from time to time, using groundwater can be sustainable.

Recent reinterpretations of old well data indicate that about 400,000 Olympic-size swimming pools of rechargeable fresh groundwater exist in Somalia. Nearby Tanzania has a deep aquifer, estimated to have enough water for two million people.

Groundwater can also support emergency drought relief operations as it can be up to 50 times cheaper to supply to communities than water delivered by trucks.

The network of deep bores could be a mixture of supply to communities with the water they need every day or for drought emergencies when other water supplies run out, dependent on factors such as resource sustainability and local preferences.

The communities who are most affected by drought in the Horn of Africa, and their seasonal movements, are also well known. This means they can be more effectively supported by networked groundwater supplies.

Working together across borders

Drilling down to this water and extracting it is not easy. It requires detailed knowledge of the local hydrogeology, and specialized drilling and pumping

equipment. So it makes sense for the five affected countries to share knowledge and resources.

The Groundwater Access Facility will bring countries together to collaborate on groundwater mapping and data sharing. It could also look at ways to use new and advanced renewable energy and water treatment technologies and how to secure climate finance to invest in the project.

It is vital that local communities be included in the planning, design, running and maintenance of the boreholes. Working with hydro-geologists and other experts, communities can help decide the best locations for the boreholes.

Deep borehole development should form part of managing water resources more holistically. For example, in places where flood follows drought, plans may be made to capture and store floodwater.

Deep boreholes could be connected to smallholder farming projects to support emergency food and feed production. The boreholes could also become assets around which to coordinate emergency drought relief efforts and future resilience building programs.

Precedents for accessing deep groundwater exist globally and lessons on collaborative governance may be gained from existing regional initiatives on management of major rivers.

The way forward

Many questions remain. For example, how would deep boreholes affect the movement and decisions of nomadic herders or displaced communities? Could boreholes cause conflict in already fragile settings? Should fossil (non-renewable) aquifers be accessed? Will the borehole water need to be purified? How can over pumping and other problems be prevented?

Because drought knows no boundaries, Kenya, Ethiopia, Djibouti, South Sudan and Uganda must work together to answer these questions and to create drought resilience and sustainable development opportunities across the whole region. The Groundwater Access Facility is a platform for them to plan how to manage groundwater in the region sustainably. A strategic network of deep groundwater bores may support such potentially transformative regional ambitions.

Dr. Jude Cobbing, advisor on integrated water resource management, Save the Children, and Andrew Harper, special adviser on climate action, United Nations Refugees Agency, contributed to this article. Some research for this article was undertaken during a Rockefeller Foundation Bellagio Residency.

The Groundwater Access Facility will bring countries together to collaborate on groundwater mapping and data sharing. It could also look at ways to use new and advanced renewable energy and water treatment technologies and how to secure climate finance to invest in the project

SOURCE: THE CONVERSATION

Law & Politics

The pivotal role of youth in shaping global diplomacy

BY EYUEL KIFLU

In the ever-evolving landscape of international relations, the influence of non-traditional actors, particularly youth, is rapidly gaining traction. Scholars and experts have long emphasized the significance of individuals, think tanks, and young people in shaping the course of global affairs. Africa, a continent with a predominantly youthful population, has emerged as a crucial player in this dynamic diplomatic landscape, thanks to the active involvement of its young citizens.

Youth diplomacy is increasingly recognized as a powerful tool for fostering understanding, cooperation, and sustainable development across borders. The engagement of young people in diplomatic efforts not only amplifies diverse voices but also ensures that future leaders are equipped with the skills and experiences needed to navigate an increasingly interconnected world.

The recent 10th BRICS Youth Summit, held in Ulyanovsk, Russia from July 22-26, 2024, serves as a prime example of the growing importance of youth diplomacy. The annual event, which brings together young leaders and innovators from the BRICS nations, provides a platform for discussion, collaboration, and the development of solutions to global challenges.

The Ethiopian Youth Council, representing over 40 million young Ethiopians, participated in the summit for the first time, with the delegation led by its President, Fuad Genna. The council's involvement in the event underscores the critical role that the country's youth are playing in shaping the international diplomatic landscape.

During the summit, the participating youth discussed a wide range of topics, including education, science, training, technology, innovation, health, sports, youth entrepreneurship, youth social work, and volunteering. Each subject was examined in-depth by an individual BRICS member country, showcasing the diverse perspectives and expertise within the group.

According to Fuad Genna, the summit provided a valuable opportunity for the youth of the respective BRICS nations to discuss common issues and actively participate in shaping inclusive political, economic, and social affairs. "The insights gained and the connections made during this event will undoubtedly contribute to the ongoing development and cooperation among BRICS nations," he stated.

The President highlighted Ethiopia's commitment to supporting BRICS initiatives.

Additionally, Ethiopia reaffirmed its pledge to provide necessary cooperation and assistance for the strengthening of BRICS.

On the sidelines of the conference, the President of the Ethiopian Youth Council engaged in bilateral discussions with youth ministers from China, India, Brazil, Iran, and the United Arab Emirates.

These discussions focused on benefiting Ethiopian youth through education, job creation, science and technology innovation, sports, and health. Fuad stated, "We have agreed to collaborate on these issues based on each country's experience and current situation."

Notably, extensive talks were held with the UAE regarding cooperation in space science. An agreement with India was reached to create a platform for Ethiopian entrepreneurial youth to receive capacity-building training and showcase their creative works globally. Furthermore, a comprehensive discussion with China explored opportunities for joint efforts within the Africa-China cooperation framework.

One of the key outcomes of the summit was the agreement to host the 2025 Africa-China Youth Summit in Ethiopia. This event will further strengthen the ties between African and Chinese youth, allowing them to collaborate on issues of mutual interest and explore opportunities for joint initiatives.

Also, the Ethiopian youth delegation visited Ulyanovsk State Pedagogical University during the conference and discussed aligning the university with Ethiopian institutions. Fuad mentioned that Bonga University and Debre Tabor University have initiated relationships, with ongoing consultations to link other Ethiopian universities. A Keficho language teaching center has been established at Ulyanovsk, where Russians are learning the language, while a Russian language center has opened at Bonga University for Ethiopian youths.

To promote Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's Green Initiative globally, a sapling planting event was held in Ulyanovsk Friendship Park with the Deputy Governor of Ulyanovsk Province.

Additionally, the delegation visited a model youth center in Ulyanovsk and gained valuable insights from the experience, the president added.

The significance of youth diplomacy extends beyond the BRICS nations and the African continent. Globally, young people are increasingly recognized as agents of change, capable of driving innovation, fostering intercultural understanding, and addressing pressing global challenges.

In the realm of conflict resolution, for example, youth-led initiatives have

demonstrated their ability to bridge divides and promote peaceful dialogue. Organizations like the United Network of Young Peace builders (UNOY) have been at the forefront of empowering young people to become active participants in peace processes, drawing on their unique perspectives and creative problem-solving skills.

Similarly, in the field of sustainable development, young people have emerged as passionate advocates and driving forces behind initiatives aimed at addressing climate change, environmental degradation, and social inequalities.

It is clear that investing in youth diplomacy is essential for building a more inclusive, prosperous, and sustainable world. By empowering young people to actively participate in international affairs, it can harness their energy, creativity, and diverse perspectives to drive positive change.

The BRICS Youth Summit, and the participation of the Ethiopian Youth Council, serves as powerful examples of the transformative potential of youth diplomacy. Through collaborative platforms like these, young people can forge lasting connections, exchange knowledge, and develop the skills needed to become effective leaders and global citizens.

However, the road ahead is not without its challenges. Barriers to youth participation in diplomacy, such as limited access to resources, institutional biases, and lack of representation, must be addressed. Governments, international organizations, and civil society must work together to create more inclusive and accessible avenues for young people to engage in global policymaking and decision-making processes.

Furthermore, the integration of youth perspectives into existing diplomatic frameworks and institutions is crucial. By breaking down silos and fostering cross-generational collaboration, it can harness the unique insights and innovative approaches that young people bring to the table.

In conclusion, the pivotal role of youth in shaping global diplomacy is undeniable. The BRICS Youth Summit, and the participation of the Ethiopian Youth Council, serves as powerful reminders of the transformative potential of youth engagement in international affairs. As the world navigates the complexities of the 21st century, it is imperative that it continue to invest in and empower the next generation of global leaders, ensuring that their voices are heard and their ideas are implemented. Only then can we have hope to build a more just, equitable and sustainable world for all.

It is clear that investing in youth diplomacy is essential for building a more inclusive, prosperous, and sustainable world

Women in Focus

Realizing childhood dream is big deal

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

Gebayel Aseged is the founder, owner, and Director of 'Gebayel for All' fashion design'. Her background had little influence on her to join the fashion industry not to mention that it was also her childhood dream to be a fashion designer.

She is known for adding cultural and aesthetic values to her design in a way that reflects the diverse sociocultural aspects of society and echoes her real sense of patriotism. However, following her childhood dream did not come easily; but she had to go through a tough journey to be where she is now.

When it comes to cultural clothes, she holds strong beliefs and advises people to wear traditional attires without waiting for different occasions and ceremonies such as holidays, religious and marriage ceremonies, festivals, and the like important programs. That gave her the inspiration to focus on designs and use materials that are needed to make cultural clothes.

Talking about the reason how she joined the fashion industry, she stated that her mother used to make clothes at her home. Luckily, her grandmother raised her ten children by sewing clothes for them. She also had the opportunity to learn crafting in her primary school, Adama Town.

From remaking clothes for her dolls (toys) to practicing designs that she learned by simply watching her mother and grandmother, she fell in love with the fashion industry. That love led her to take different short-term design courses. However, her mother got a bit concerned as she thought she could not go further with her education. Thus, she had to wait until she joined higher education.

Once she joined the Mechanical Engineering field at Addis Ababa University, she had to dedicate more time to her class; but she began designing her clothes. When she was a fourth-year student, her brother understood her deep desire and allowed her to take short-term courses.

After accomplishing her degree, she started her business along with her friend she met with in design class; using the machine that her brother bought for her. They started making custom designs and learned a lot about the business world, as to her.

According to her, she has learned a lot from the journey they have gone through with her friend. Thus, they decided to borrow money and expand their business; and they did it. Unfortunately, they couldn't move as they expected. They encountered major challenges due to lack of experience and the business area, among others.

They stayed in the business for about a year but things did not go as planned. Lack of experience and failure to handle business over friendship were the challenges their business faced at the moment. Though she was not against working in collaboration, she stressed that putting strong boundaries between friendship and business needs to be a prioritized issue for the business to flourish.

"When I got to the business right after my graduation, my family and people around me had warned me saying it could be more



Gebayel Aseged



challenging." However, she insisted that even if the business couldn't go as planned she would rather learn from her mistakes. She was lucky enough that she had her family's full support besides her strong commitment to her religious beliefs."

Unfortunately, the loss of her father came at a time when she was preparing to begin her business from her house. She was heartbroken and had to go through a difficult time



Currently, she has a vision of producing all types of attires that would minimize time and cost for customers at affordable prices. Opening branches and penetrating the international market are also among her priority goals

At the time, African Mosaic announced training opportunities for designers. Due to her situation, she didn't dare to be part of the training. As the only female child in her family, she had a deep connection with her father. It was very hard to accept his death; however, her mother insisted that she had to attend the training.

Designers who took African Mosaic training were expected to showcase their sketching

and design work once they accomplished the training. After losing her father, she fought with depression for too long. Plus, witnessing individuals that committed suicide due to depression, made her situation even more difficult.

"The perception I had about mental health, like everyone else, was related to spiritual issues. It took me time to realize that it was like other illnesses that we could be cured if we got help and timely treatments accordingly. Life has its ups and downs. The main point is we have to stand up straight though it is not always full of a bed of roses."

Nonetheless, instead of giving up following the loss of her father, she tried to manage it through dedicating her time to the job and other mind-captivating things.

After doing her research on depression, she came up with her new design entitled 'Beautiful hearts behind depression'. This collection she showcased at African Mosaic enabled her to represent her country at Germany, Berlin Niyo Fashion Festival. She was highly admired for the way she portrayed depression through her collection.

She seized the opportunity to showcase her talents during her difficult time "One thing I learned about this job is that, as a youth, we spent too much time figuring out what is in our dream and the reality on the ground. However, when we start accepting the reality and the situation we are in, we can find the opportunities," she said while explaining the importance of understanding situations.

After deciding to restart her own business, Gebayel engaged in making clothes in the shop where her mother used to work. She gradually began promoting her designs using social media platforms which led her to present her works on various fashion shows.

According to her, 'Gebayel for All', the brand name for her products, is a simple but elegant design that gives charisma to the customer. She admires old fashions and she recalls the jewelries that are made of gold, bronze, and silver; her grandmother used to beautify herself at that time, as to her.

Taking that as an inspiration, she uses such traditional jewelries on the threads that are made by the weavers to add more magnificence to the clothes. She usually buys those jewelries from Axum and Lalibela areas and makes designs on the clothes the way she wants.

Given the fact that her design has a traditional unique touch that is produced with natural local materials, mainly, woven cotton used to make traditional clothes, she takes advantage of each occasion that she attends to introduce and promote her works. Oftentimes, people admire their uniqueness and order her to produce for them.

Currently, she has a vision of producing all types of attires that would minimize time and cost for customers at affordable prices. Opening branches and penetrating the international market are also among her priority goals.

She also advised youths particularly those who are running their own business to be patient as seeing a business flourishing and growing could be time-consuming and needs dedication. More importantly, she underlined that they need to compete with no other than themselves.

Society

Religious institutions in promoting peace, solidarity, national unity

BY LEULSEGED WORKU

In a country like Ethiopia where people with different religious backgrounds live in harmony, religious institutions, and their leaders have a significant role to play in guiding communities and promoting unity and peace, respect and tolerance, understanding, and compassion across diverse populations to reinforce social cohesion and build a stronger and a united country.

Throughout history, religious institutions and religious fathers have been playing a significant role in promoting a culture of living together peacefully, avoiding disagreements, and resolving differences through dialogue and discussion. By preaching peace, unity, love, and solidarity, and advising conflicting parties to resolve disagreements in peaceful discussions, they have been striving to sustain peace, tolerance, unity, love, fraternity, and compassion among all human beings.

Mainly, pursuing peace, love, acceptance, and compassion among others are the core values of any religion, religious institutions and leaders have been working to this effect- to foster peace and a spirit of unity and togetherness, nurture the values of friendship and understanding between and among different groups.

The recent conference held here in Addis Ababa also gave due emphasis to the roles that religious institutions and religious leaders can play in promoting love, peace, unity, and acceptance among the people.

At the 16th Regular Session and recognition forum of the Inter-Religious Council of Ethiopia held recently in the presence of President Sahle-Work Zewde, Peace State Minister Keyredin Tezera (PhD), religious leaders, and invited guests, it was stated that religious institutions need to work more on peace and forgiveness, promote the cultural and religious values of the people as well as to strengthen respect and solidarity.

Speaking on the occasion, President Sahle-Work Zewde said that religious institutions need to be engaged in common national agendas by preventing issues that could erode the values of respect and solidarity.

The role religious leaders can play in educating the faithful is vital, the President added.

Reaffirming the need for cooperation in common national issues, President Sahle Work noted that actions that could erode the values of respect and solidarity between religions should be prevented.

According to her, since it is impossible to bring about development and economic growth in the absence of peace, religious teachings, and spiritual guidance are issues



of critical importance to sustaining peace and stability.

Taking these into consideration, the President urged religious institutions and religious leaders to strengthen their constructive engagements in ensuring peace in the country.

Peace State Minister Keyredin Tezera(PhD) on his part said that the role of religious institutions in developing the values of solidarity and unity among Ethiopians is immense, Religious institutions have been playing a critical role in sustaining peace, stability and the unity of the country for centuries, he added.

Reaffirming that the Ministry of Peace will continue strengthening its cooperation with the Inter-Religious Council of Ethiopia to utilize the potential of religious institutions for nation-building and sustainable peace, he urged the institutions to discharge their responsibility accordingly.

Inter-Religious Council of Ethiopia Chairperson, Abune Gorgorios also said that the Council is a spiritual institution established to nurture the values of peace and solidarity among human beings in collaboration with stakeholders.

Stating that the council has been working on strengthening the centuries-old culture of mutual respect and mutual support among

the people of Ethiopia and the religious institutions, he reaffirmed to work more on these core values.

“The Council will continue its efforts to strengthen the values of peace, respect, and solidarity,” the Chairperson reiterated.

There is no doubt that the role of religious institutions in resolving conflicts and establishing peace and reconciliation in a society is beyond words. They have an irreplaceable role in promoting peace, and togetherness, which are crucial in building a more cohesive and resilient nation that values the dignity and worth of every human being.

Indeed, as a country that has developed strong religious and cultural values over a long history, religious institutions have greater significance and serve as agents to reinforce social unity and stability and motivate people to work for positive social change.

Especially, at the time that Ethiopia is now undertaking various activities to hold its first national dialogue in response to the long attached inconveniences and disagreements, the role religious institutions can play in promoting mutual understanding among different segments of the society and cultivating peace and reconciliation is crucial. Religious institutions have the power to influence and persuade the masses,

to create mutual understanding and trust between and among the faith communities as well as nonbelievers because all share common principles- peace, unity, justice, forgiveness, and the like matters- that are foundations to create social integration and a sense of belonging, thereby bring peace and creating a unified society.

Primarily, by using their power to influence the masses, in line with the teachings of their religion, religious leaders can bring about change in critical social causes, such as peace and harmony; and contribute to the advancement of national agendas that promote peace, justice, and prosperity for all members of society.

What is more, they can serve as catalysts for social cohesion- to bringing together people from diverse backgrounds- to work towards common goals and address shared challenges. Through their teachings and outreach efforts, they can meaningfully promote inclusivity, diversity, and respect among all members of society.

In this regard, institutions like the Inter-Religious Council of Ethiopia have a significant role in ensuring sustainable peace and deepening the sense of unity among Ethiopians. Religious fathers, revered for their wisdom, compassion, and spiritual guidance, hold a special place in the hearts of Ethiopians, serving as a moral compass and custodians of tradition and heritage. In this regard, by engaging in constructive conversations, national agendas, joint initiatives, and shared celebrations, religious institutions can serve as a bridge to narrow differences and promote a spirit of unity and solidarity among followers of different faiths.

Furthermore, as places where peace and forgiveness are preached, they can serve as mediators of conflict resolution and reconciliation. As has been witnessed several times in Ethiopia, religious leaders and institutions often serve as mediators, peacekeepers, and advocates for reconciliation.. Using their moral authority and spiritual guidance to foster dialogue, understanding, and the practical concept of forgiveness they can ensure sustainable peace in Ethiopia.

In conclusion, the role of religious fathers and institutions in Ethiopia is essential in sustaining peace, fostering fraternity, and promoting unity among the diverse communities of the nation. Through their teachings, actions, and spiritual leadership, these respected figures and institutions exemplify the values of compassion, tolerance, and solidarity that form the foundation of a harmonious and inclusive society where all Ethiopians can live in peace and mutual respect.

International News



Black Panther actress Connie Chiume dies aged 72

Connie Chiume, a veteran South African actor who appeared in Marvel film Black Panther, has died at the age of 72, her family has announced.

The multi-award-winning actress starred in several South African TV shows including Rhythm City, Zone 14 and most recently, Gomora. Chiume was a trained teacher but later became a household name on mainstream television.

She died at a Johannesburg hospital on Tuesday afternoon, a short family statement said.

"The Chiume family regrets to inform you of the passing of the internationally acclaimed award-winning actress Connie Chiume," the statement said. The family asked for privacy during this difficult period and said it would communicate further details later.

Her son Nongelo Chiume told TV broadcaster Newzroom Africa that she was admitted for a "medical procedure" before her death.

Chiume graced South African TV for decades in shows such as Rhythm City, with the country's public broadcaster SABC News describing her as a "beacon of hope" in their tribute.

She rose to prominence as an actress in 1989 when she appeared in the popular South African television series Inkomo Edla Yodwa.

In the 2018 Black Panther film, Chiume starred as Zawavari – a member of the Wakandan Tribal Council. In the 2022 sequel Black Panther: Wakanda Forever she replaced Zuri (Forest Whitaker) as Wakanda's Elder Statesman.

She was also highly celebrated for her

appearances in Beyoncé's Disney musical film based on The Lion King, in which she played Simba's mother, Sarabi.

Her most recent role was in Heart of the Hunter, released earlier this year, and she also appeared in TV series Soon Comes Night in February.

Chiume was given several awards, including an NTVA Avanti Award for Best Actress in a Drama Series for her role in Soul City in 2000.

Later in 2009, she received a South African Film and Television Award (SAFTA) for Best Supporting Actress in a Drama for her role as Stella Moloji in the family drama Zone 14.

She was born in Welkom, in Free State province, to a Malawian father and a Zulu mother. She trained as a nurse but ended up as a teacher.

In 2022, she told the MacG Podcast that she would like for people to remember her the way they choose to. "I have impacted each and every person in a different way. Whatever way I have impacted you, remember me that way."

Tributes have flooded in on social media with some of her fans describing her as a versatile actress who played a multitude of roles in the South African television industry.

"Her outstanding work will always be remembered," the South African government posted on X.

She leaves behind four children - two sons and two daughters.

BBC NEWS

Russia accuses Ukraine of opening 'African front' as Niger cuts Kyiv ties

Ukraine is seeking support from the Global South, but several West African states are ditching Western ties to turn to Russia.

Russia has accused Ukraine of opening a "second front" in the war between them in Africa after Mali and Niger broke off diplomatic relations with Kyiv, accusing it of supporting "terrorist groups".

The claim by Moscow followed an announcement from Niger's military government on Tuesday that it has cut ties with Ukraine. Several states in West Africa have recently ditched longstanding ties with the West to turn to Russia.

Niamey said on Tuesday that the change in relations with Ukraine would happen "with immediate effect".

The move was in line with that of neighboring Mali's military government, which on Sunday announced it was severing relations with Kyiv over its role in an attack in the north of the country in which Tuareg rebels said they killed dozens of Wagner mercenaries and Malian soldiers.

Andriy Yusov, a spokesperson for Ukraine's military spy agency, said that the Malian rebels had received the "necessary" information to conduct the operation.

"The government of the Republic of Niger learned with great amazement and deep indignation, the subversive and unacceptable remarks of Mr Andriy Yusov," Amadou Abdramane, a spokesperson for Niger's military government, said as he announced the diplomatic break.

Niger will ask the United Nations Security Council to debate Ukraine's "aggression," he added.

On Monday, Ukraine condemned Mali's decision to sever relations as short-sighted and hasty, saying Kyiv rejected the allegation of Ukrainian support for international terrorism. Ukraine did not

immediately respond about the move by Niger.

Niger and Mali are both run by military governments that took power in recent coups. Both have since ripped up defence agreements with France and turned to Russia for military support.

"Unable to defeat Russia on the battlefield, the criminal regime of Volodymyr Zelenskyy has opened a second front in Africa," Russian foreign ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said, according to the RIA Novosti news agency, as she accused Ukraine of "pandering to terrorist groups in countries on the continent friendly to Moscow."

On July 25, three days of intense fighting erupted near the Mali-Algeria border at a military camp at Tinzaouatene. Tuareg-led separatists said they had killed 84 fighters from Wagner and 47 Malian soldiers.

Mali's army has admitted it suffered a "large number" of deaths during the fighting but has not released figures.

As well as condemning Yusov's comments, Niger, Mali and others in West Africa have blasted those of Ukraine's ambassador to Senegal, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Ivory Coast and Liberia.

Senegal's foreign ministry summoned Ukrainian ambassador Yuriy Pyvovarov on Friday over a video it said the Ukrainian embassy had posted on its Facebook page in which Pyvovarov provided "unequivocal and unqualified support for the terrorist attack" in Mali.

The spat is viewed as a significant hit to Ukraine's efforts to win global support as it defends itself against Russia's invasion, and, in particular, to broaden its appeal in the Global South.

Aljazeera news

Coordinated efforts: UN supports SAMIDRC in Democratic Republic of Congo

The Security Council authorized a resolution to enhance MONUSCO's assistance to SAMIDRC in the DRC through better coordination, sharing of information, and offering technical help.

The Security Council reached a unanimous decision to adopt a resolution that empowers the UN mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) to support the Southern African Development Community Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (SAMIDRC) by enhancing coordination, sharing information, and offering technical assistance.

Michael Imran Kanu, Permanent Representative of Sierra Leone to the United Nations said, "The draft resolution also seeks to create conducive environment for the implementation of ongoing regional



peace efforts, including welcoming the recent ceasefire agreement that was brokered by Angola between the governments of the DRC and Rwanda. We believe that dialog

is extremely critical for the settlement of dispute between the conflicting parties in the DRC."

Nathalie Estival-Broadhurst, who serves

as the Deputy Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations, outlined several important aspects of this peacekeeping mission.

"The United Nations mission is prepared to deliver technical support for the protection of civilians and can facilitate logistical aid for medical evacuations, in addition to sharing information. This represents a crucial move in enhancing international initiatives to combat violence in eastern DRC," she said.

Together with France and Sierra Leone as co-penholders, the "A3 plus one" coalition, which includes Algeria, Mozambique, Sierra Leone, and Guyana, has shown its support for the AU Peace and Security Council (AUPSC).

African news



Published Weekly in Collaboration with Haramaya University

HU's Dengago Model Tree-Based Restoration Project results

Recently, Haramaya University (HU) disclosed that promising results have been achieved through Dengago Model Tree-Based Restoration Project (Denegego land recovery project) in the many works done in the past three years in.

HU began the project with the financial support from the Federal Environment, Forestry Development, and Climate Commission. This was announced in a ceremony at the beginning of the week where more than 100 fattening sheep were given to the farmers living in the project area to improve their livelihood.

During the handover ceremony of the fattening sheep ceremony, Dr. Yisak Yusuf, Vice President of Haramaya University Research and Community Engagement, said that Haramaya University is working with partners to recover natural resources in a way that will benefit the local community.

He also added that government institutions and other stakeholders at all levels should stand by the University and do their part to improve the lives of the society by protecting and preserving



Sheep provided to the local community

natural resources.

The head of the Maya City Agriculture Office, Mr. Zeleke Abdeta, commended Haramaya University for its effective collaboration with his office, the community, and government structures at all levels. He mentioned that their work could serve as a model for other places, and he appreciated the progress made quickly.

Mrs. Fatuma Hasan, the head of Maya City's Environmental Protection Office, stated that the University's initiatives to conduct research on natural resources within the

community by planting native seedlings and edible fruits have been effective. She also expressed her appreciation for the University's efforts in this regard.

Dr. Tesema Toru, a lecturer at Haramaya University and the coordinator of the project, clarified that the Dengago model is one of the several projects funded by the Norwegian government for federal forest development in collaboration with universities. He explained that they are working to restore the area by planting various types of fruits and saplings that are

well-suited to the local soil.

He explained that the project has helped to improve the vegetation cover of the watershed, raise the groundwater level, re-develop dry springs, and improve the life of the community, creating a sense of ownership among the community. Various activities are being carried out in line with the goals of the project.

In the Dengago tree-centered land recovery project, in cooperation with administrative bodies at all levels, from the Kebele, indigenous fodder and fruit trees that were planted in the past three years have started to bloom. The farmers are fulfilling their responsibilities as beneficiaries.

Among the beneficiary farmers, Adam Abdullah and Rabia Abdi, residents of Biftu Geda Rural Kebele, said that soil erosion has stopped, the bare land has been covered with trees, and springs have been developed. They added that they are happy to have received the best seeds for animals and crops from the project to support their livelihood. (Haramaya University Public and International Relations Directorate reported.)