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## Macroeconomic reform: *Remedies of business communities' hurdles*

BY MESERET BEHAILU

Despite the indispensable role business communities play in driving holistic development, Ethiopia had not got an enabling environment that freely involve these bodies over the past many years. The government recently launched the macroeconomic reform to tackle the challenges in the area. Accordingly, officials and economists are commending the reform including the implementation of floating rate system mentioning that it would help mushroom business communities and increase their contribution to the national development.

Three weeks ago, the incumbent has introduced macroeconomic reform to address a number of constraints including

*See Macroeconomic ... page 3*



Getachew Teklemariam



Abebayehu Durefa

## EIC keen on sustaining FDI achievement

BY ASHENAFI ANIMUT

ADDIS ABABA – Ethiopia's consecutive and comprehensive reforms and competitive investment ecosystem formations are paying off in registering a remarkable Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) growth, Senior Policy Advisor said.

During the recently convened stakeholders meeting on attracting finance and investment for the

*See EIC Keen ... page 3*

## South West gears for massive tree-planting campaign

- *Set to plant 19 mln saplings in day*

BY MISGANAWASNAKE

ADDIS ABABA - In a significant push for green development, South Western Ethiopia State is set to plant nearly 19 million saplings in a day.

The state expects over one million citizens to participate in this large-scale tree-planting campaign.

The State Agriculture Bureau and Natural Resource Development Deputy Head Wubshet Zenebe told the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that on August 23, 2024, during a 12-hour nationwide tree plantation program, the state aims to plant approximately 18.9 million trees.

In the month leading up to this event, the state has prepared around 23 million tree seedlings and designated planting areas. Wubshethighlighted that a diverse group of citizens, including religious leaders, elders, youths and students will join in planting saplings, contributing to the fight against climate change.

The planting will take place across six zones and 41 districts within the state, with the saplings will be tracked and counted using GPS technology. As part of the national goal to plan to plant 600 million seedlings in a day, the state plans to plant about 60 % food-

*See South West ... page 3*



## Ethiopia targets India to agricultural exports, unveils new study

BY YESUF ENDRIS

ADDIS ABABA –Agriculture Minister Girma Amente (PhD) unveiled a new study yesterday titled "Export Opportunities Study for Oilseeds, Pulses, Cotton, and Coffee from Ethiopia to India," highlighting the potential of utilizing India as a key alternative market.

In 2022, trade between Ethiopia and India reached a significant volume of 2.8 billion USD. However, Ethiopia's exports to India

stood at only 80 million USD, revealing considerable room for growth.

The study offers a comprehensive analysis of Ethiopia's production and export capabilities, identifying key opportunities to enhance the export performance of vital commodities such as oilseeds, pulses, cotton, and coffee. The minister emphasized that Ethiopia has implemented major macroeconomic reforms to create a more favourable business environment, alongside newly reformed agricultural

policies aimed at boosting productivity, enhancing value chains, and expanding market access.

"Notably, we have liberalized commodity exports, allowing foreign companies to purchase directly from Ethiopian farmers and processors, stated the Minister. "This policy shift is designed to bolster our export sector, particularly for oilseeds, pulses, hides, skins, and other critical products."

*See Ethiopia targets ... page 3*

# News



Yasin Kelil

## Werabe facilitating investment opportunities

BY MENGITEAB TESHOME

**WERABE** - Werabe City Administration unveiled lucrative investment opportunities to local and foreign investors, as Mayor Yasin Kelil promised steady support in an ambition to achieve economic boom.

Speaking to the media, Werabe Mayor Yasin highlighted city's strategic investment advantages. "We have prepared 700 hectares of land for industrial zone, equipped with a new power substation to supply electric energy."

The city administration is striving to provide vital infrastructures that could enhance investment, he said, indicating that additional 400 hectares of land has been prepared for a new industry space which is being facilitated with basic infrastructures.

"We are creating an environment that welcomes businesses, fosters innovation, and offers unparalleled opportunities for growth," Mayor Yasin stated. "We are not just building a city, we are building a future. We seek investors who share our vision and are ready to be part of this exciting journey."

The city's future looks bright, with numerous development projects on the horizon, which include highways connecting Werabe to the Gurage zone and neighboring Oromia State, as well as a planned dam construction within the coming years, the Mayor mentioned.

These projects promise to further enhance the city's appeal to investors and contribute to its overall prosperity, he noted.

So far, over 147 investors have established facilities in Werabe, with 30 additional investments already to commence operation, he disclosed.

He emphasized the city's reliable power supply, thanks to the newly operational power substation, is ensuring both residents and industries owners have access to reliable energy.

Werabe is now in good shape for each of the city's development plan prioritizes the demand of the residents in line with the national development agenda. "We believe this creates a smooth and productive environment for businesses to thrive," he expressed.

According to the Mayor, the city is on a steady fast track of development since the Siltie people got constitutional acknowledgement in 2002.

Once a small city, Yasin noted that Werabe has become the hub of economic and social center of the State and it is also one of the capital cities in the Central Ethiopia State -a seat for social affairs.



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## Enterprise advances Nat'l quality standards with ISO 17025 compliance

BY MESERET BEHAILU

**ADDIS ABABA** – The Ethiopian Conformity Assessment Enterprise (ECAE) is intensifying efforts to provide quality management services in line with the ISO 17025 standard.

ECAE's Director General, Meaza Abera, informed *The Ethiopian Herald* that numerous activities have been undertaken to secure this international quality management standard, which is crucial for ensuring that materials and products meet global benchmarks.

According to Meaza, ECAE is working closely with the Ministry of Trade and Regional Integration (MoTRI) and various states to promote quality

production and service delivery that aligns with international standards. She emphasized that extensive supervision and inspection have been carried out over the past five years on both domestic and imported goods to ensure they meet these standards. Achieving international standards, Meaza, noted, is vital for boosting productivity, reducing waste and enhancing customer's satisfaction.

ECAE's primary focus includes production quality management and education quality management, aiming to help entities achieve international standards. Currently, the enterprise operates nine well-organized laboratories, one in Addis Ababa and the rest in regional areas, all of which assess the quality of products and

services.

The director general further highlighted that ECAE evaluates and certifies the quality of various goods, including food, agricultural inputs, electronics, garments, leather products and minerals, ensuring they meet the global standards. In the last fiscal year, the enterprise issued over 23,000 certifications in sectors such as services, exports, imports, and manufacturing, achieving over 90 % of its planned performance.

It is worth recalling that Addis Ababa Tegbareid Polytechnic College received the first ISO 9001/2015 quality management certification five years ago, recognizing its high-work performance.



## Gov't financing reforms vital for boosting Ethiopia's agriculture: Industry leaders

BY YESUF ENDRIS

**ADDIS ABABA** - Government-led financing reforms are proving crucial in supporting the agricultural private sector by addressing financing shortages, according to agricultural enterprises.

Girma Mengistu, Production Manager of Friendship Agro-Industry PLC, told *The Ethiopian Herald* that his company has been producing animal fodder for the past 14 years, though challenges in securing finance for importing certain inputs continue to pose difficulties.

In addition to producing fodder, the enterprise operates a poultry farm with

30,000 hens. Despite challenges with inputs, Girma noted that the market remains full of opportunities. "While about 98 percent of fodder inputs are sourced locally, some ingredients, such as vitamins, must be imported," he explained.

Girma urged the government to further ease financing systems, as well as logistics and transport services for imported ingredients, to enhance the productivity of enterprises.

He also highlighted that rising input costs are pushing some enterprises out of the market, and the low adoption of scientific animal feeding practices is leading to lower quality animal

products.

Leulseged Belay, an importer of agricultural machinery, echoed these sentiments, emphasizing the need for more liberalization in the financing system. His company imports and supplies machinery that supports the government-led mechanization process.

The agricultural sector, which is growing at an average rate of 5.2% per year, is increasingly embracing mechanization. This sector, contributing one-third of the national GDP and accounting for 65% of employment, remains a cornerstone of Ethiopia's economy, according to the Minister of Planning and Development.

# News

## Macroeconomic reform: ...

hard currency crunch. The economists and officials agreed that the floating rate system would address many challenges in the economy of the east African country.

African Financial Integrity and Accountability Program's Coordinator, Getachew Teklemariam told The Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that the macroeconomic reform is significant to realize economic development.

For years, there was a high level of loan burden in Ethiopia that forced the private sector to struggle with the inaccessibility of adequate foreign exchange. In the previous system, exporters paid taxes and importers were subsidized, but it was not fair and many business communities were harmed in such way. "That is why I said the macroeconomic reform is substantial," he added.

"Indeed Ethiopian economy has been facing by different factors such as conflict,

but the macroeconomic reform is vital to bring sustainable development. However, the government should provide subsidy for those who might face challenges in the implementation period," Getachew suggested.

The floating exchange rate would help the business community for facilitating activities and ensuring international competitiveness. In this regard, he said, the government has made its preliminary activities especially in supplying money so as to reduce shortages.

Among others, addressing foreign exchange crunch, boosting production and productivity, encouraging exporters, reducing parallel market challenge, attracting foreign direct investment (FDI) and filling the import and export gaps are the significances of the floating exchange rate, he elaborated.

National Bank of Ethiopia, Deputy Director,

Abebayehu Durefa on his part said that Ethiopia has made significant preparation when it takes the macroeconomic reform measures. Therefore, the country would not be exposed to economic crisis (like many other countries) upon implementation.

"The macroeconomic reform will benefit the business communities for setting the currency in a system where the price is determined by the market. It means that the central bank will not interfere rather than regulating the system," he noted.

Abebayehu added that the central bank was affecting exporters by cutting half (50%) of the foreign currency they brought.

However, the free floating system is giving the business communities the right to use their hard currency completely, he said, adding that it is a golden opportunity for them to run their activities freely.

Furthermore, the central bank has carried

out various reforms to create a suitable environment for the business communities and increasing gross domestic products (GDP), Abebayehu stressed.

Addis Ababa Chamber of Commerce and Sectoral Association's President Mesenbet Shenkute said "Private sector had been encountering lack of adequate loan, foreign currency and the likes, in the past many years."

Though the private sector is playing a pivotal role in creating jobs, maximizing government revenue, improving quality production and productivity, Mesenbet underlined that the business communities have been facing lack of sufficient infrastructure, loan accessibility, and the likes.

However, the President noted that the recent macroeconomic reform will play significant role in addressing such challenges in the future.



## South West gears...

related or fruit-bearing seedlings, with the remainder being multipurpose trees that will enhance urban landscape."

Wubshet also noted that 86 % of the trees planted last year have survived and are growing well. He urged the community to

participate actively and responsibly in this vital environmental initiative.

The nationwide tree-planting event, scheduled for August 23, 2024, aims to plant around 600 million seedlings across the country in a single day.

## Ethiopia targets India to agricultural exports, ...

Indian Ambassador to Ethiopia, Anil Kumar Rai, praised the mutual commitment to enhancing economic ties and mutual cooperation between the two nations. He emphasized the natural synergy between India's growing demand for high-quality agricultural products and Ethiopia's rich agricultural sector as a significant opportunity.

The Indian Embassy in Ethiopia remains committed to facilitating

increased bilateral trade and encourages Ethiopian businesses to explore new opportunities in the Indian market, according to Ambassador Rai.

Despite the expanding trade exchange between the two countries, the trade balance remains tilted in favour of India, underscoring the need for strategic efforts to enhance Ethiopia's export potential.

## EIC keen on sustaining...

energy transition in Ethiopia workshop, the Ethiopian Investment Commission (EIC), Senior Policy Advisor Tadesse Kassa (PhD) stated that the government has been rolling on designing strategies, policies and frameworks in a bid to effectuating the flow of investment ecosystem and creating fair playfield for private investment and competition in the country.

To that end, he highlighted that its value proposition in terms of growing consumer market, strategic location to middle East, Europe, Africa and Asian countries, preferential trade agreements and competitive factors of production, trainable and competitive labor are among the significant factors making Ethiopia top and preferable FDI destination.

"The reformist government has provided fiscal and non-fiscal incentives, reliable logistics and other infrastructures, forex and trade liberalization to help boost investment. Similarly, market-oriented reforms and business friendly environments



have been facilitated," he underscored.

So far, about 11 legislations are revised to enhance business landscape. "Over 80 legal administration reform activities are implemented thereby reducing time and cost of doing business," he said.

Moreover, under the second generation of homegrown economic reform, he underscored that the country has been working on four pillars such as macroeconomic reforms, creating conducive investment climate, boosting productivity across various sectors and

efficient civil services.

"Crafting a three-year initiative, the government has also sustained the rapid growth, stable macroeconomic environment and created decent job opportunities."

On her part, EIC Commissioner Hanna Arayaselassie told the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that as its prior mission, the commission has been identifying the major investment bottlenecks and revising policies, directives and embarking on promotional activities with regard

to the country's immense investment destination areas.

Although the country lays on the forefront in FDI in East Africa, she stressed that it has been seriously challenged by limited access to foreign currency.

Therefore, she noted that the macroeconomic revision coupled with opened up sectors would be a significant impetus for the operating investors as well as for others who have keen interest to invest in the country.

Citing the 2023 World Investment Report, United Nations Trade Development, Senior Economic Affairs Officer Stephania Bonilla-Feret (PhD) stated that sixty-six countries introduced about 146 policy measures affecting foreign investment in 2022.

Accordingly, three quarter of the measures more favorable to investment were adopted in developing countries including Ethiopia. Amongst, the majority were investment facilitation initiatives, followed by investment incentives and the opening up of new sectors and activities to FDI.

# Opinion

## Ethiopia's corridor development: *An inception for city tourism*

BY LAKACHEW ATINAFU

Ethiopia's ambitious corridor development initiatives have captured global attention in recent years. By establishing a network of transport, logistics, and industrial hubs, the country aims to transform its economic landscape and position itself as a regional powerhouse. Ethiopia's corridor development strategy is rooted in its desire to accelerate industrialization, boost exports, and reduce the country's reliance on agriculture. The construction of modern roads, railways, and industrial parks is intended to improve connectivity, streamline logistics, and attract foreign investment. Corridors like the Addis Ababa-Djibouti and the Hawassa-Moyale corridors are seen as catalysts for economic growth and regional integration.

On the surface, the corridor development initiatives hold the promise of job creation, improved living standards, and increased foreign exchange earnings. The creation of special economic zones and industrial parks has the potential to diversify the economy and foster the growth of manufacturing and service sectors. Furthermore, enhanced regional connectivity could strengthen Ethiopia's position as a hub for trade and logistics in the Horn of Africa.

As Ethiopia navigates the corridor development landscape, it must strike a delicate balance between economic ambition and social responsibility. Ensuring transparent and inclusive decision-making processes, mitigating environmental impacts, and prioritizing the well-being of affected communities will be crucial for the long-term success of these initiatives.

The fate of Ethiopia's corridor development initiatives will hinge on the government's ability to address the complex challenges that lie ahead. If executed with foresight, sustainability, and a commitment to equitable development, these projects could indeed transform the country's economic landscape and solidify its position as a regional powerhouse.

However, failure to address the social, environmental, and financial risks could undermine the long-term viability of these initiatives, leading to a potential backlash and disillusionment among the Ethiopian people. The coming years will be a critical test of the country's ability to navigate this delicate balance and deliver on the promise of corridor development.

Ethiopia, with its rich cultural heritage, diverse landscapes, and vibrant cities, has long been a popular destination for adventurous travelers. While the country's stunning natural wonders, such as the Simien Mountains and the Danakil Depression, have traditionally drawn the majority of visitors, Ethiopia's urban centers are now emerging as hubs of cultural exploration and economic dynamism, offering untapped potential for the growth of urban tourism.

In recent years, Ethiopia has experienced rapid urbanization, with cities like Addis Ababa, Hawassa, and Bahir Dar rapidly expanding and transforming. This urban

transformation has been driven by a combination of population growth, economic development, and government investment in infrastructure and public services.

As a result, these cities have become increasingly attractive to both domestic and international visitors, offering a diverse range of cultural, historical, and recreational experiences. From the bustling markets and museums of Addis Ababa to the charming lakeside setting of Hawassa, Ethiopia's urban landscapes are brimming with opportunities for immersive and enriching tourism.

Ethiopia's urban centers hold a unique appeal for tourists, blending modernity with deep-rooted traditions. Visitors can explore vibrant neighborhoods, sample the country's renowned cuisine, and engage with local communities, offering a more holistic and authentic experience compared to the traditional safari or trekking-focused itineraries.

Furthermore, Ethiopia's urban areas serve as gateways to the country's renowned natural wonders, allowing travelers to easily combine city exploration with outdoor adventures. This seamless integration of urban and rural experiences presents a compelling proposition for the discerning traveler.

Despite the growing interest in urban tourism, Ethiopia faces several challenges in fully capitalizing on this potential. Infrastructure development, particularly in the areas of transportation, accommodation, and public services, remains a key priority. Enhancing the quality and diversity of tourism offerings, such as cultural attractions, recreational activities, and entertainment options, will also be crucial for attracting a wider range of visitors.

However, these challenges also present significant opportunities for investment and collaboration between the public and private sectors. By addressing these infrastructure and service gaps, Ethiopia can position its urban centers as vibrant, well-equipped, and attractive destinations, catering to the evolving preferences of the modern traveler.

As Ethiopia continues to modernize and diversify its economy, the potential for urban tourism to contribute to the country's overall growth and development cannot be overstated. By leveraging its rich cultural heritage, innovative urban planning, and strategic location, Ethiopia can emerge as a premier urban tourism destination, offering visitors a truly unique and immersive experience.

The successful development of urban tourism in Ethiopia will require a concerted effort from policymakers, tourism operators, and local communities to create a sustainable and inclusive ecosystem. With the right strategies and investments, Ethiopia's urban centers can become vital catalysts for the country's economic and social transformation, cementing its status as a must-visit destination for discerning travelers worldwide.

Here are some of the key advantages of urban tourism potential for Ethiopia in order

to attract more tourists:

Ethiopia's urban centers are hubs of rich cultural heritage, offering visitors the opportunity to immerse themselves in the country's ancient traditions, vibrant art scene, and dynamic social fabric. Tourists can explore historic landmarks, participate in festivals and celebrations, and engage with local communities, providing a more authentic and meaningful travel experience.

Ethiopia's cities offer a wide range of tourism experiences beyond the traditional safari or trekking activities, including culinary adventures, architectural exploration, and recreational pursuits. This diversity of experiences caters to the evolving preferences of modern travelers, who often seek a more well-rounded and immersive itinerary.

Ethiopia's urban centers serve as gateways to the country's renowned natural wonders, allowing tourists to easily combine city exploration with outdoor adventures. Improved infrastructure, such as transportation networks and accommodation options, in these urban areas enhance the overall accessibility and convenience for visitors.

The growth of urban tourism can contribute to the diversification of Ethiopia's economy, creating new employment opportunities and generating additional revenue streams. Investments in urban tourism infrastructure and services can also catalyze broader economic development, benefiting local communities and businesses.

When developed sustainably and with a focus on community engagement, urban tourism can promote inclusive growth and environmental stewardship. By prioritizing the preservation of cultural heritage, the protection of natural resources, and the equitable distribution of benefits, Ethiopia can position its urban tourism as a model of sustainable development.

As Ethiopia's urban centers emerge as hubs of economic and cultural activity, they can serve as anchors for regional integration, fostering stronger connections and exchanges with neighboring countries.

This can enhance Ethiopia's position as a strategic hub for trade, investment, and tourism in the Horn of Africa. By highlighting these advantages and effectively communicating them to potential tourists, Ethiopia can capture the attention of a wider audience and position its urban tourism offerings as a compelling and unique selling point for the country's overall tourism sector.

To support the renovation of Ethiopian cities and build better metropolises, the government and key stakeholders are expected to undertake the following such as investing in the upgrading and expansion of transportation networks, including roads, public transit, and airports to improve connectivity and accessibility.

Developing integrated urban planning and zoning frameworks to ensure the efficient and sustainable use of urban spaces; investing in the modernization and expansion of

utilities, such as water, electricity, and telecommunications, is essential to meet the growing demands of urban populations.

In addition, establishing clear and transparent regulations and policies that facilitate urban development encourages private sector investment, and protects the rights of residents. Besides, streamlining administrative processes and reducing bureaucratic hurdles highly contributes to enable faster and more efficient implementation of urban projects. Implementing land use policies also facilitates to balance the needs of economic development, housing, and environmental preservation.

Furthermore, the promotion, and adoption of sustainable urban design principles, includes green building standards, energy-efficient infrastructure, and public green spaces along with the use of renewable energy sources and the implementation of waste management systems to enhance the environmental sustainability of cities.

Moreover, integrating climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction measures into urban planning and development processes has to take remarkable position in the corridor development.

Investing in the development of high-quality tourism infrastructure, such as hotels, restaurants, and cultural attractions, to cater to the needs of visitors; enhancing the quality and diversity of tourism services, including tour operations, visitor information centers, and cultural experiences; Promoting the integration of urban tourism with the broader tourism ecosystem, leveraging the country's natural and cultural assets; and facilitating collaborative partnerships between the government, private sector, and local communities to ensure inclusive and participatory urban development will help to advance the project.

In addition, strengthening the capacity of local authorities and urban planning professionals to effectively manage and implement urban development projects along with the engagement of the local community to understand their needs, concerns, and aspirations, and incorporate their feedback into urban planning and decision-making processes should never be put aside.

The other area of the question that matters is exploring innovative financing mechanisms, such as public-private partnerships, to mobilize the necessary resources for urban renewal and infrastructure development.

By addressing these key areas, the government and stakeholders can create an enabling environment that fosters the renovation and transformation of Ethiopian cities into vibrant, livable, and sustainable metropolises, thereby enhancing the country's urban tourism potential and overall competitiveness.

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

# Editorial

## Unceasing talks yield sweet fruits

The second round of talks between Ethiopia and Somalia was held in Ankara on August 13, 2024 setting the stage for the third round of talks which is expected to devise an amicable solution to the existing differences between the two neighboring countries.

In a media statement following the talks, Foreign Minister Taye Atske Selassie clearly and succinctly put the fact that Ethiopia pins hope on the talks to close the chapter of misunderstanding and open a win-win one between the two sides. The Minister had this to say: "Ethiopia is indeed cognizant that great things could be decided through continuous engagement."

The commitment and keenness of Ethiopia to press ahead with Ankara's process have once again proven Ethiopia's firm position to advance its legitimate interests in a peaceful manner.

Taye reaffirmed that Ethiopia needs to "secure dependable access to and from the sea". There is no way to regress from this. The country's booming economy and bulging population make the issue of a sea outlet a matter of survival. Ethiopia deliberately chooses a peaceful route to serve its interests. Its interests are not unknown to all coastal countries that share a boundary with Ethiopia. And out of many of these countries, Somaliland has weighted the issue and taken a brave decision.

Ethiopia, a country whose men and women have shaded their blood to help Somalia stand on its own two feet, never engages in actions that contradict the noble cause of ensuring lasting peace in the Horn. It must be known that Ethiopia is always after win-win benefits.

Hence, attempting to escalate tension in the region serves no purpose. Countries in the Horn should work to build on their hard-won peace and security. The threat of al-Shabab and other extreme forces has already brought enough problems. There are also a few actors in Africa that want to fish in troubled waters. Their sole interest is to remain hegemony in the region. The entities see any development measures in the region with a green eye. The Nile countries have shown the actors that evil wishes cannot materialize. The lessons must be learned in the Horn region as well.

Over and beyond, statelessness made Somalia and its people suffer for nearly two decades. The ramifications of those years have still made the region vulnerable to terrorist threats.

Talks are the only way out of the current misunderstandings between Ethiopia and Somalia. There is not an iota of difference that goes beyond the capacities of the two countries. What it takes is just commitment and open-mindedness to seek an amicable solution.

In this regard, Ethiopia has not only branded the adage 'African solution to African challenges,' it has also practically proven the dictum true. One can see how it championed cooperation among the Nile countries. It has worked hand-in-glove with the countries of the Nile. The Nile countries have now paved the way for establishing the Nile River Basin Commission after over a decade of negotiation. By the same token, Ethiopia and Somalia can work together in a brotherly fashion.

Ethiopia, as always, is resolute to deescalate tension and normalize relations with its neighbor. The fact of the matter is that Somalia must uphold the principle of 'African solutions to African challenges'. It should carefully scrutinize decisions that may go against the security and economic interests of Ethiopia.



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# Opinion

## Full implementation of macroeconomic reform policy critical for Ethiopia's prosperity

BY SOLOMON DIBABA

Over the last 50 years, Ethiopia has been swinging in a vicious circle of political regime changes which failed to bring any meaningful differences in the livelihood of ordinary citizens. The autocratic feudal economy, command economy of the Derg regime and the ideals of revolutionary democratic system utterly failed to address the basic needs of the people of Ethiopia. The country had to grapple with a number of socio-economic and political hurdles that were carried over from the history of the country setting the stage for multiple sets of crisis the nation was forced to face.

These, among others include: shortages in foreign exchange, high Inflation rate, fiscal deficit, unemployment and poverty, inadequate infrastructure development, low level of linkage between the economic sectors, periodic political unrest and ethnic tensions, dependency on agriculture, very low access to finance for development, lack of good governance, corruption, and illicit financial transactions, wastages on public material and financial resources, climate change induced drought and flood, landslides.

The imperatives of reengineering the socio-economic development programs of the nation through a series of reforms that were conducted by the government over the last five years necessitated developing a Home Grown Nation Economic Reform Policy that focused on addressing the major development bottlenecks the country had continued to face for decades.

The recently introduced new macroeconomic reform policy has been developed over the last five years in the context of a Homegrown Grown National Economic Reform Policy issued in 2022. Unlike previous government development policies that were a prototype of economic policies that fell short of the desired economic development of the country, the Home Grown National Economic Reform policy focused on the main pillars of the economy including agriculture, industry, tourism and improvements in social services with tangible and measurable results.

The policy that was carefully crafted over several years geared towards resolving the major bottlenecks in financial, fiscal, monetary and government management of public revenue and expenditures. This policy that was implemented in two major phases became a prelude to developing

an integrated national Macroeconomic Reform Policy formulation in which more than 100 experts here and at overseas had participated. Contrary to some assertions, it was not a policy that was drawn out of the blue but had evolved through rigorous and painstaking negotiations with major international financial magnets like the IMF and the World Bank to ensure that the national interest of the country is best served. As the result of strong and professional conduct of economic diplomacy, the country was able to successfully secure the financial resources that were needed to ascertain continuous economic growth and development.

Ethiopia managed to secure more than 27 billion USD in loans and grants which is by all standards a loan the country has ever received from foreign financial institutions. It is the highest amount of foreign financial loan and grants ever disbursed in Africa. These gains were made possible thanks to the institutional and personal diplomatic activities that the leaders of the government have conducted over the last five years.

The government will disburse the loan obtained for various purposes including debt reduction, raising the salary of low income public servants which are expected to be vulnerable to the reforms, to implement rural and urban safety-net programs, for purchase of fertilizers, subsidies on fuel, edible oil and for implementing regular development programs.

What are the major advantages that the government can obtain from this huge amount of foreign loans? In the first place this loan is instrumental in markedly reducing the foreign debt that has been accumulated for years payable through longer holidays. In addition, the government will have access to increased public fund to operate on various outstanding projects that we stalled due to financial constraints and put in place modern tax management and promotion of investments with focus on the private sector. Furthermore, market based price management will prevail.

Moreover, FDI flow will be accelerated further strengthening the nascent industries of the country thereby serving to reduce an appalling level of unemployment among urban and rural youth. The government will be able to boost diversified export earnings and also encourage import substitution efforts by helping to create competitive firms which will also include public enterprises that will produce quality products.

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

# Business & Economy

## Means for maximizing resource integration-Industrial Parks

BY MENGESHA AMARE

Since the advent of the first modern industrial parks in the 1960s, industrial parks have evolved in a variety of ways, from early enclaves to the contemporary economic zones, due to the increasing digital technologies being inextricably linked to urban growth, modernization and era of utilizing state-of-the-art technologies.

The primary goals of establishing industrial parks are to immediately focus on macroeconomic concerns, particularly global interactions and disparities between developed and developing regions.

Cognizant of the fact that industrial parks have been playing a cardinal role in bolstering economic growth, *The Ethiopian Herald* had a stay with Mengistu Tulu, an economist graduated from Haramaya University in Agricultural Economics, to have professional point of view along that line.

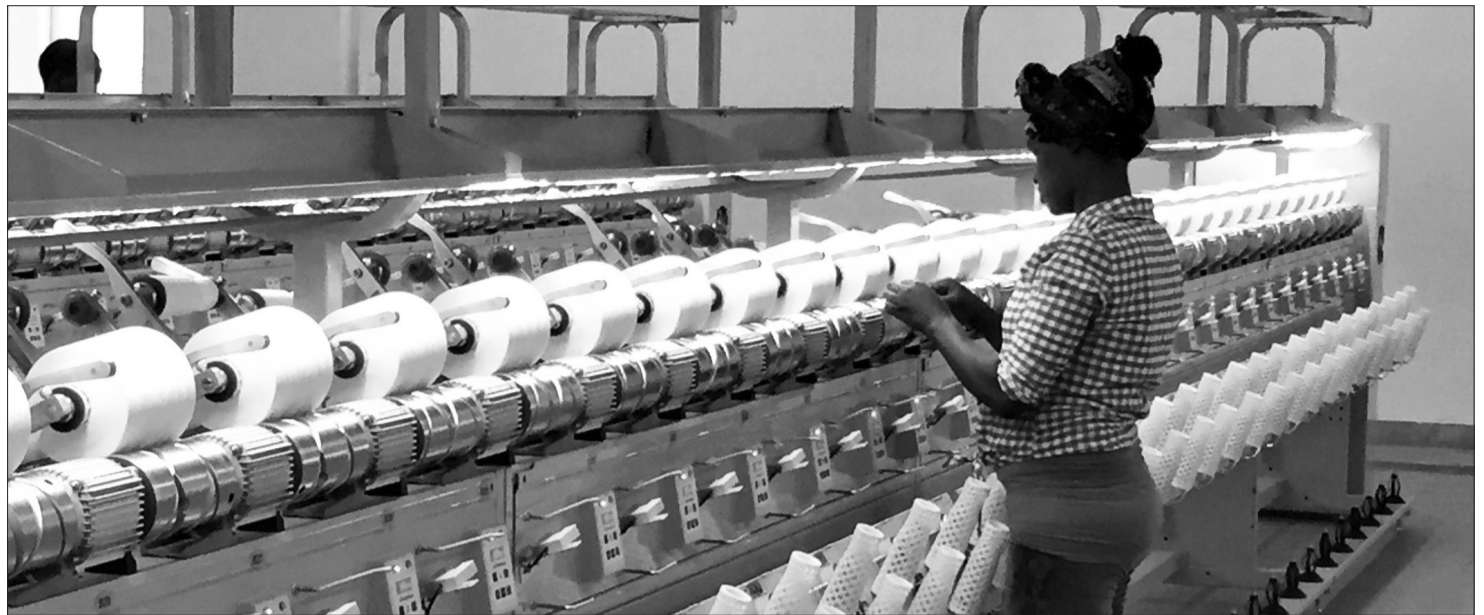
He said, "Industrial parks can maximize resource integration for limited production factors within a certain spatial scope by attracting labor and capital-intensive domestic and foreign investment in manufacturing and service industries, for instance. Economic growth has been predicted to lead to greater equality, eventually eliminating poverty. On the other hand, in contrast to agriculture, industrial park development factors are more flexible and can adapt better to environmental, regional, and national conditions and circumstances. As a result of this remarkable phenomenon, many nations are concentrating their efforts on creating industrial parks as an economic engine. Nations have also been able to help their growth and development by acquiring with industry and utilizing the experiences of other countries."

As to him, depending on Ethiopia's geography, politics, infrastructure, and objectives, numerous industrial parks have been established across the nation and given due emphasis to the sector thereby booming the economic growth of the country.

Of the many countries widely exercising industrial park development, China stands out as the most successful example of industrial park development in terms of local benefits identified as economic zones. In addition, India has the most large-scale industrial parks from which Ethiopia can draw important lessons regarding this lucrative sector, he opined.

Mengistu further elucidated that, the development of the industrial park has been one of the priorities of the plans of different countries including ours and has created a magnitude challenge concerning regional disparities.

The policy implementation for industrial park development needs to take three crucial things into account: economic growth, environmental issues, and reduction in regional disparities and the development of industrial parks played an important role in regional development as regional areas



Fiber fashion sources from industrial parks

benefit economically from the development of industrial parks, he added.

He said, "The establishment of industrial parks as a result of regional development can result in rapid urbanization, which can exacerbate the negative effects of pollution. However, such an unconstructive repercussion can be reverted by working hard. Industrial park developments have been increasingly important in developing regions during the last two decades. Industrial parks have enhanced regional development, demonstrating the necessity and significance of establishing industrial parks."

According to Mengistu, for industrial park development, the Ethiopian government should stress green growth. Environmental issues are the primary steps of the development plan both in developed and developing countries. Thus, the traditional model of the industrial parks should be upgraded towards a green development plan.

A green environment includes the use of renewable energy, the design and implementation of green space in industrial parks, and the use of up-to-date materials in the construction of industrial parks. Due to this issue, the government should consider, instead of increasing the number of industrial parks in mega-cities, developing industrial parks in the rural and less developed regions based on the upgraded industrial park development, he said.

Therefore, Mengistu added the country can simultaneously achieve the superior goal of developing industrial parks considering sustainability economic, social and environment approaches.

No doubt, Mengistu stated, industrial parks have great importance for the economic development – from local and regional even to the global level. They represent modern platforms that provide excellent conditions for investment and development, encourage industrial development, and bring large benefits to the nation.

In highly developed countries, industrial parks are enormous business centers with the entire necessary infrastructure, and are placed at the intersections of key transport links. This has made it easier for tenants to do business, use resources, apply a circular

business model, reduce expenses, and better manage their risks.

For underdeveloped and medium-developed countries such as Ethiopia, industrial parks are the most efficient way of stimulating economic development, modernizing the industry, embracing innovation, and increasing the number of jobs available.

The most important thing is that the development of parks attracts foreign investments, which is of strategic importance for these countries. What speaks to the importance of industrial parks is the fact that their concept has served as a model for creating new platforms, such as agro-industrial parks, technology or science parks, innovation districts and eco-industrial parks. This speaks to the possibility of adapting this concept to different conditions, such as the increasingly complex world economy and the need for new production processes and structures. Mengistu said industrial parks easily respond to new market demands, they are advancing and becoming an integral part of industrial development and beyond.

Industrial parks can have a positive influence on the revitalization of business environment, transfer of modern technologies, and the destructuralization and modernization of industry in any economy.

"Industrial parks are one of the most important factors supporting positive and progressive economic development. They strengthen the industrial base of small and medium-size towns, increase the efficiency of urban land use, and reduce rural-urban migration. Firms located in industrial parks often use the services of local companies, creating not only backward and forward linkages, but also diffusing economic learning to the wider business community."

The concentration of firms can provide citizens at the vicinity with significant spillover effects both inside and outside the parks – that is, information spillovers, including knowledge and technology; the specialization and division of labor among enterprises; the development of skilled labor markets as well as the development of markets around the parks.

He said, "Well planned and equipped parks stimulate the relocation of industries to

semi-urban or rural areas and help to relieve congestion and pollution in metropolitan areas. Further, industrial parks represent an opportunity for an influx of foreign investment and decrease of unemployment by means of creation of new jobs and other benefits of regional industrial development of the economy." Industrial parks have undoubtedly a positive impact on business in a country where they are located. They are beneficial in the fact that they apply modern technologies and innovations, bring economic and innovative potential or internationally well-proven know-how, and thus support the process of reconstruction and modernization of the industry, he added.

As inadequate infrastructure is a major factor hindering the industrial development of the emerging states of the nation, this challenge and related hurdles have to be well abated thereby declaring poverty free nation. The development of such parks will encourage the pace of modernization so that the industrial units will become more competitive and investor-friendly in the underdeveloped parts of the country. With a clear and pragmatic approach, the governments of Ethiopia is adopting various policy measures for the development of industrial parks in their strategic sectors so as to utilize fully their immense industrial as well as agglomeration potentials for making the country a vibrant industrialized economy with faster, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth.

According to Mengistu, a green environment includes the use of renewable energy, the design and implementation of green space in industrial parks, and the use of up-to-date materials in the construction of industrial parks. Yes, industrial parks development has been increasingly important in developing the country over the last few years.

Generally, industrial parks are significantly useful in enhancing economic development, promoting production and productivity as well as excellently reducing poverty via creating a number of job opportunities for many. The significance of establishing industrial parks has to be well expedited as it would be instrumental in helping the nation defeat poverty and underdevelopment as the latter has been the long awaited vision of the nation.

# In the Sphere of Diplomacy

## Ethiopia, U.S partnership in the sphere of education

BY EYUEL KIFLU

Ethiopia and the United States of America are celebrating 120 years of diplomatic relations this year. The two countries share a strong bond across various sectors, with education being a key area of collaboration.

Many Ethiopian students are pursuing their education at prestigious U.S. universities, showcasing the growing ties between the two nations. Furthermore, the collaboration between Ethiopian and U.S. universities in research, knowledge exchange, and other areas highlights the strong bond between the two countries.

The recent August 15-16, 2024 Higher Education Leaders Capacity Building Culminating Workshop in Addis Ababa exemplifies this partnership. The U.S. Embassy in Addis Ababa, in collaboration with Texas Tech University, Ohio State University, Oklahoma State University, and the Ethiopian Ministry of Education, hosted a closing ceremony for the Leadership, Management, and Governance (LMG) program.

The LMG program, a key component of the U.S. State Department's University Partnership Initiative (UPI), has successfully equipped 50 university presidents and vice presidents from 37 of Ethiopia's public universities with essential leadership and institutional management skills. This program, which began four years ago, was delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

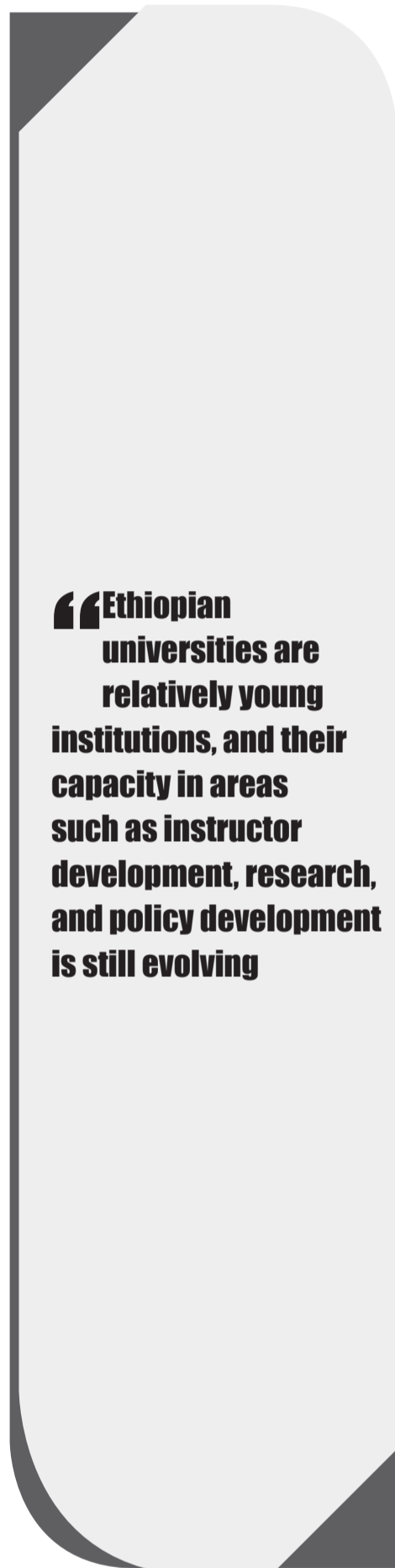
Over the past two years, participants have benefited from in-country training and immersive study tours to Texas Tech, Ohio State, and Oklahoma State Universities, gaining valuable insights into best practices and challenges in higher education leadership and administration.

Dr. Desalegne Mengesha, Country Director of the Ohio State University Global One Health Ethiopia office told *The Ethiopian Herald* in an exclusive interview that the project aims to enhance leadership and management skills within Ethiopian higher education institutions.

The project has trained over 50 individuals in two rounds, with participants including presidents and vice presidents from Ethiopian universities and representatives from the Ministry of Education. The training program, which combines in-country instruction with a study tour to three partner universities in the United States, provides participants with practical experience in research, infrastructure, curriculum development, faculty empowerment, financial management, and internationalization.

"The trainees witnessed how U.S. universities conduct research, observed their infrastructure, and gained insights into their approach to quality education, including curriculum design and teachers empowerment" said Desalegne "the trainees returned with valuable experience from their trip".

The project aims to bridge the gap between Ethiopian universities and their



international counterparts, fostering collaboration and knowledge exchange. Desalegne emphasized the importance of international partnerships for Ethiopian universities, enabling them to secure funding and implement projects crucial to the country's development.

"Ethiopian universities need to cultivate strong international relations with international universities and donors," he said. "These partnerships are crucial for attracting projects that address critical national priorities. By collaborating with international partners, they can secure funding and expertise to implement impact full project."

The project is particularly relevant as Ethiopian universities are relatively young

and face challenges in areas such as faculty development, research capacity, and policy implementation. By training university leaders, the project aims to address these challenges and foster a more effective and efficient higher education system.

"Given the high international standing and impactful research of U.S. universities, Ethiopian Universities have much to learn," said Desalegne. "Ethiopian universities are relatively young institutions, and their capacity in areas such as instructor development, research, and policy development is still evolving. By strengthening the leadership capacities of university presidents and vice-presidents, they can begin to address these challenges and empower those working within the institutions."

The project also emphasizes the importance of community engagement and service. Trainees are encouraged to apply their newfound knowledge to improve policies, management systems, and funding allocation within their institutions, ultimately impacting the lives of their communities.

"The experience gained through this project in research and community service will enable participants to improve policies, internal management systems, and financial management," he said.

The project includes ongoing monitoring and evaluation, with trainees presenting their progress on implementing the learned practices within their respective universities. While acknowledging the challenges of fully implementing all aspects of the U.S. model, Desalegne expressed confidence that the project will lead to positive changes in Ethiopian higher education.

"During the training, participants were given the opportunity to select tasks they wanted to implement in their respective universities," he explained. "Following the training, they are expected to present or report on the progress they are making in implementing these initiatives."

The project has also extended its reach beyond the initial training program. Ten research universities in Ethiopia participated in a week-long training session on internationalization and research, in collaboration of the U.S. Embassy in Ethiopia and Ohio State University. This training was developed based on the reflections of participants in the original project.

He expressed optimism about the project's impact, stating that participants have identified practical solutions that can be implemented within their universities. He believes that the program will contribute significantly to the development of a stronger and more effective higher education in Ethiopia.

In exclusive interview with *The Ethiopian Herald*, Associate Professor Binyam Tilahun, Vice President for Research and Technology Transfer at the University of Gondar, highlighted the institution's efforts to enhance its research capacity and

funding through a program inspired by U.S. universities.

"Universities in Ethiopia, including Gondar, have a strong tradition of research, often conducted with limited government funding," Professor Binyam explained. "We have a history of competing and winning international projects, but there were gaps in our approach."

Two years ago, the American Embassy launched a Leadership, Management and Governance program, selecting individuals from Ethiopian universities to participate. Professor Binyam was among those chosen, and he spent 21 days visiting three U.S. universities: Texas Tech, Ohio State, and Oklahoma State Universities.

"We observed first-hand how U.S. universities attract students, write research proposals, and secure funding," Professor Binyam said. "We brought back this knowledge and have been working to implement it in our own institutions."

According to Binyam the program has focused on several key areas such as multidisciplinary Research which means U.S. universities encourage collaboration among diverse experts, leading to more comprehensive research proposals. Professor Binyam emphasized the importance of adopting this approach in Ethiopia.

Secondly he mentioned that the program highlighted innovative methods for generating income for research activities, a vital aspect for universities seeking financial independence.

Also, the endowment system which is American universities often benefit from it, where alumni and community members donate their wealth to support the institution. While this practice is less common in Ethiopia, Bahir Dar University is exploring its potential, with a recent donation leading to the development of a new hospital.

Moreover, Professor Binyam emphasized the importance of ensuring research benefits society. He pointed to the "extension" programs prevalent in American universities, where research actively engages the community, leading to more impactful results. Ethiopian universities are actively working to implement a similar model, aiming to bridge the gap between academic research and societal needs.

"We have implemented many of these practices and are already seeing positive changes," Professor Binyam said. "We have established a research directorate to manage grant funding, ensuring accountability and transparency. We are also adopting the U.S. model of having independent financial and business professionals manage research funds."

Professor Binyam's insights offer a glimpse into the evolving landscape of research and funding in Ethiopian universities. The program, inspired by American practices, is poised to strengthen the capacity of University of Gondar and potentially serve as a model for other institutions across the country.

# Law & Politics

## High time to rectify the long-awaited global imbalance

BY DANIEL ALEMAYEHU

Reforming the global system has been a hot issue in recent times. Establishing a more inclusive and balanced world coupled with global system needs a holistic and comprehensive approach. Most of those critics say that the system has been used for so long, and it must be reformed in order to take the same path with the current global truth.

Inclusion and fairness have been the key concerns for those who need the reform. It is the fact that most of the powerful institutions coupled with global financial organs are believed to be restricted and unfair. Such reality is vividly seen especially in the African representations in the organs.

In the current climate, Africa has been calling the entire world to establish a fair system so that it will include the excluded. To meet the desired objective, a real reform must be accepted and implemented by member states of the high table organs.

The call for reforming the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) has, for instance, been entertained by most nations, especially Africa and the Global South. To this point, countries like Ethiopia has played the lion share in advocating such powerful stride towards inclusion and fairness.

At some point, the issue has gained some ears from the responsible stakeholders. And, there are some well acknowledged decisions and actions taken by some blocs like the G20 as the bloc agreed to include the African Union (AU) as its permanent member. The move definitely gives the Africa an opportunity to voice on some key global issues.

Besides, in recent times, some interesting news have come from the global finance institutions regarding incorporating and dedicating more seat to those who have not been represented as expected. In the recent report, Tobias Rasmussen, IMF Resident Representative in Ethiopia, stated, "The IMF is focused on ensuing an inclusive international financial system that meets the evolving need of this region. We have reached some important milestones just in the past year."

Accordingly, the IMF Board of Governors has lately issued a resolution on creating a 25th Chair at the IMF's Executive Board, based on the recent IMF's press release, adding, "On July 16, 2024, the IMF Board of Governors, the highest decision-making body of the IMF, issued a new resolution to increase the number of Executive Directors on the IMF's Executive Board by adding a 25th chair intended for Sub-Saharan Africa."

Approval by the Board of Governors, as to the presser, to change the size of the Executive Board requires an 85%



**Africa with over a quarter of the United Nations membership is grossly underrepresented in the Security Council, and this is a historical injustice that must be rectified**

majority of the total voting power. The Fund's membership approved the resolution allowing for the creation of a 25th chair, exceeding the required threshold. The new Executive Board of 25 Executive Directors will take office on November 1, 2024.

Though the aforementioned actions have been exercised, Africa and the Global South still call for more tangible global reforms. The African Continent, through some of its state leaders and elites, is pushing hard to get its permanent representations in those blocs and organs. In good truth, Africa

appreciates the already decided actions from those blocs and institutions, but the continent still wants a reformed system to be implemented so that more than 1.3 billion people will have a permanent representative who defends their interest.

In addition, the issue of reforming the global system is highly supported even by some of the powerful states. UN Secretary-General António Guterres also said, "With the structural aspects of the reforms now well consolidated, it is imperative to keep the foot in the pedal to achieve the cultural change we need for greater collaboration across pillars and tangible results for people on the ground."

Many of the members of the United Nations and its institutions have shown their willingness to support African nations to represent themselves in those administrations. Russia, with a Veto Power in the UNSC, for instance, has disclosed its support towards the African countries' quest of having permanent seats at the UNSC.

Having a stay with a local media, Evgeny Terekhin, Russia's Ambassador to Ethiopia, stated that the current composition of the UN Security Council is unjust and does not reflect the global reality. To this end, Russia has fully reiterated its supports to the quest of African countries for a permanent seat at the United Nations Security Council.

Africa with over a quarter of the United Nations membership is grossly underrepresented in the Security Council, and this is a historical injustice that must be rectified, the ambassador said, adding, "Every year it is getting even clear to everyone that many years ago, when the United Nations Organization was established, there was an injustice made regarding African countries. I mean that African countries, which constitute by now more than a quarter of the voices in the United Nations, are deprived of a permanent seat in the Security Council."

Justifying the unfair representation and imbalance, the ambassador noted that the

UN founding in an era when only two or three African nations were independent contributed to this imbalance. The world has changed dramatically since then.

Ambassador Terekhin added that it is high time to correct this anomaly. "Almost 80 years have passed, the global situation has radically changed; and it is high time to correct this political and historical injustice," he noted.

Moreover, the ambassador pointed out that the UN Security Council frequently addresses African issues, making it imperative for the continent to have a permanent voice in decision-making. Therefore, Russia has been expressing support for the principles outlined in the Ezulwini Consensus and Sirte Declaration, which advocate for African representation on the Security Council.

"We support African countries to get their place in the Security Council, 70% of the agenda is towards African problems. So, it is natural that we support the general principles envisaged in Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration." However, Ambassador Terekhin cautioned that any expansion of the Security Council should be approached with care.

We must avoid inflicting damage to the UN system, he underscored, adding that the current composition, with three permanent members representing the West, is already skewed. Admitting additional Western powers like Japan and Germany would exacerbate this imbalance.

"The composition is already distorted in favor of the West, and at the same time we are witnessing attempts to admit to the permanent membership of two more Western countries such as Japan and Germany." The ambassador stressed the importance of careful consideration before making changes. "We should measure our steps many times." Recall that some countries in Africa, including Ethiopia, have been advocating for a reform of the UN, especially the Security Council.



# Society

## Promoting and protecting the rights of women, persons with disability

BY MENGISTEAB TESHOME

We all agree that safeguarding the rights of women and physically disabled individuals is not only a matter of justice but a fundamental aspect of building a fair and inclusive society. These groups often face discrimination, marginalization, and lack of access to essential resources and services, which make their lives more challenging and inconvenient; and at the same time urge to take tangible measures that protect their rights and provide sustainable assistance.

Several documents confirm that women and physically disabled individuals have been the most exposed vulnerable groups in society for a number of reasons. They often encounter barriers that prevent them from fully participating in social, economic, and political life.

To avert such barriers, individuals and institutions as well as associations have been fighting for it, though the desired outcomes have not yet achieved. Due to this, experts in the area still encourage institutions and countries to safeguard the rights of women and disabled individuals because increasing the participation of these segments of the society and benefitting them has higher return to the overall development of the country. Making sure that women and disabled individuals have the same rights and opportunities as others is a fundamental human rights matter. Discrimination based on gender or some type of disabilities is a violation of these rights and must be addressed. Inclusive societies are stronger and more resilient. By safeguarding the rights of these groups, it is possible to make a difference - in achieving equal rights for all, promoting social cohesion and create environments where everyone can contribute to the common good.

Protecting the rights of women and disabled individuals helps them to access education, employment and entrepreneurship opportunities, leading to become productive and self-reliant economically, which is key to reducing poverty at individual, family, community and national levels.

Every individual deserves to live with dignity and respect. Safeguarding these rights ensures that women and disabled individuals are treated with the respect they deserve, free from violence, exploitation, and abuse.

Safeguarding the rights of women and physically disabled individuals is a critical step toward creating a more just and inclusive society. By implementing comprehensive legal protections, raising awareness, and providing sustainable assistance, we can ensure that these groups have the opportunities and support they need to thrive. It is the responsibility



**Every individual deserves to live with dignity and respect. Safeguarding these rights ensures that women and disabled individuals are treated with the respect they deserve, free from violence, exploitation, and abuse**

of governments, organizations, and communities to work together to protect these rights and build a future where everyone can live with dignity, respect, and independence.

To garner the aforementioned benefits, lately the Ministry of Women and Social Affairs, and UN Human Rights Commission in East Africa signed an agreement that enables the two to work together on the rights and protection of

woman and disabled citizens.

Speaking on the occasion, Women and Social Affairs Minister Ergogie Tesfaye (PhD) said that, the agreement is a testament that shows government's commitment to ensuring human rights, gender equality and social justice.

Whenever, there are some kinds of social crises, women, young girls, elderly and disabled people would be exposed to unparalleled problems. Further than this, gender-based violence, social discriminations, coupled with challenges in accessing basic services are impacting these segments of the society hugely, she added.

"The Ministry is striving to provide all inclusive social protection services to the physically disabled persons and elderly citizens, as well as safeguarding the rights and security of children, at the same time enhancing the participation and benefits of women and youth people.

However, to ensure social justice and achieve tangible outcomes in the efforts, the active involvement and commitment of all pertinent bodies and stakeholders is of critical importance. All actors need to come together, cooperate and work determinedly to bring the desired outcome, according to the Minister.

These groups often face discrimination, marginalization, and lack of access to essential resources, making it crucial to implement measures that protect their

rights and provide sustainable assistance.

This cooperative framework will also show Ethiopia's determination to protecting the human rights and the overall safety of women, disabled people and the like vulnerable citizens as well as to ensuring gender-equality and social justice.

Along with this, the agreement could serve as a roadmap to reinforce the rule of law, equality and accountability as well as to translate internationally signed agreements to the ground, she added.

Mentioning that, the agreement could further strengthen the cooperation and coordination of the two institutes [the Ministry of Women and Social Affairs and the UN Human Rights Commission in East Africa]; the Minister extended her gratitude to the Institute for the comprehensive support it has been providing to this point.

Representative for UN Human Rights Commission in East Africa, Marsele Kilemetakohofa also said that, the steps taken by the government of Ethiopia to protect the human rights of citizens are encouraging.

He further noted that, the UN Human Rights Commission plays an indispensable role in promoting and protecting human rights in East Africa. Through its monitoring, advocacy, capacity-building, and humanitarian efforts, the Commission works to address the complex and varied human rights challenges faced by the region. While challenges remain inevitable, the UNHRC's continued engagement, in collaboration with regional partners and civil society, is crucial for building a future where the rights of all individuals in East Africa are respected and upheld.

The agreement will also support the efforts carried out to protect human rights and sustain accountability. The UN will work with due emphasis for the successful realization of the agreement and will provide the required assistance, the Representative affirmed.

The agreement will last for three years and during these periods activities including capacity building, system devising, awareness raising and mobilization will be the core pillars of the accord, it was learnt.

Representatives of the two parties also vowed to join hands and further strengthen the activities that have already begun so that; make them successful.

Currently, with the cooperation of the two institutes, the preparations of the national woman rights protection guideline and comprehensive law for disabled persons are underway, as per the Ministry of Women and Social Affairs.

# Planet Earth

## How forest development is soaring achievement in sports and public health

BY EPHREM ANDARGACHEW

“Our victory is linked to the forested areas where we practice” Says athlete Tamrat Tola, the Paris 2024 Olympic Marathon Champion, who spoke about the role of green areas in promoting sports. Indeed, Ethiopia is well known for its outstanding performance in athletics especially long distance running. It is also believed that the altitude and forest coverage of the areas where the athletes do exercise have some role in the effectiveness in athletics.

Ethiopia’s forest habitats are diverse, ranging from tropical rainforests to montane forests and woodlands. Forest development is clearly an important part of Ethiopia’s environmental and economic plan.

Ethiopia is home to a diverse range of flora and fauna, including several endemic species, hence the country employs forest development to maintain and safeguard the biodiversity and ecosystems of the country. In addition, Furthermore, forests serve an important role in biodiversity conservation and animal habitat creation.

Forest development is also very important for the country’s social and economic well-being. Forests support the livelihoods of many rural populations through timber, non-timber forest products, and fuelwood. The forestry industry also contributes significantly to job creation and revenue growth.

Taking these facts into account, Ethiopia’s successive governments have launched reforestation and afforestation initiatives. Unlike past regimes, the current Ethiopian government has established and implemented reforestation and afforestation efforts, including the Green Legacy Initiative, which aims to plant billions of trees. This is a very important program since it focuses on community-based forestry management approaches that encourage more local participation in conservation initiatives.

As a result, these forest areas play a crucial role in the country’s sports promotion. By offering natural training settings, forest development may have a substantial positive impact on sports and athletics in Ethiopia. For instance, popular athletes in Ethiopia have access to great training grounds in the country’s varied forest area settings. The terrain’s variation also can improve endurance training. Cross-country racing may benefit greatly from the use of forested areas, which can support regional and national sporting events.

Forest areas also encourage outdoor activities across the country. Particularly since Entoto Park was built, a lot of Ethiopians visit it for a variety of sports. Adventure sports lovers go there by attracted their natural beauty, which can promote an outdoor culture that includes mountain biking and orienteering. They maintain their health by participating in simple sports. Having access to natural settings promotes physical activity, which improves community health and is crucial for producing future athletes.



*As a result, for Ethiopian runners, forests provide a unique combination of physical, emotional, and communal advantages that can improve their training and overall athletic performance*

As a result, for Ethiopian runners, forests provide a unique combination of physical, emotional, and communal advantages that can improve their training and overall

athletic performance. Practicing in forest areas helps runners develop resilience, enhance their abilities, and establish a stronger connection to their heritages and surroundings by utilizing the natural environment.

Cognizant of forest development in the country, Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (Dr.) has called on the people to plant 600 million seedlings overnight as part of Ethiopia’s forest development efforts. The Prime Minister asked the public to put their legacy throughout Ethiopia with a cohesive attitude, saying, “When we come together, we can achieve more.” Accordingly, Abiy stated that adults and youth would show their love for the country by planting 20 and 10 trees, respectively. Let’s make sure our contribution to the future generation is in the correct location”, he said.

Following the PM call, Tamrat Tola and other Paris Olympics competitors responded by planting tree seedlings at the Gulele Plantation Center. During the event, athlete Tamrat Tola, who won the marathon medal at the Paris Olympics this year, stated: “Our victory is linked to the forested areas where we practice.” “We are able to win because we are enjoying the windy and fresh air created by the trees in the areas where we always practice.”

He added “I always practice in the forest areas. I, and the majority of the athletes who drove our country to victory, love the breezy air provided by the trees in the mountain places where we exercise. I am pleased to be able to plant tree seedlings in an area where I can develop my skills.”

“The athlete and the forest have a deep and linked relationship. We would not be able

to reach our goals unless we practiced in a forest setting. Because when we practice to be a winner in the world athletics race, we practice having fresh air which is not polluted by various things”, he commented.

He explained, saying, “I have loved planting tree seedlings ever since I was a child. Thus, contributing to the Green Legacy initiative, which aims to plant one billion trees nationwide, entails safeguarding the environment and ensuring that people have access to clean air. Athletes in particular can gain strength, achieve success, and maintain their health by training in forested environments.”

The Green Legacy initiative is an example of an Entoto area that prevents excessive temperatures from arising as a result of climate change while also providing fresh and breezy air. As a result, he imparted the message that “We must always plant saplings to make Ethiopia a better place, a more comfortable and pleasant country for its citizens. Everyone should take care of the saplings they plant, just as they would their own children.”

He stated “Just as we made Ethiopia famous by winning the race, we must do more to make our country famous through the Green Legacy initiative. Hence, all Ethiopians should make planting and nurturing seedlings a part of their culture.”

Indeed, Ethiopia’s forested areas offer a unique and excellent setting for sports training. They boost physical performance through altitude and varied terrain while also promoting mental health and community connection, making them essential to athletes trying to develop their abilities and endurance.

Ethiopia’s forested settings help greatly with athletic training, notably for runners. It offers altitude training. Elevations in many forested locations aid athletes in developing endurance and improving oxygen usage, both of which are critical for performance. The diverse terrain helps athletes build strength, agility, and balance, which improves overall sports performance. Aside from that, forested settings are often cooler than metropolitan ones. This can be advantageous for training, especially during the warmer months, since it allows athletes to exercise more comfortably.

Furthermore, forest development in Ethiopia not only improves the ecological landscape but also creates chances for sports and athletics. Ethiopia can cultivate a healthy population, encourage environmental stewardship, and generate economic possibilities through sports tourism by combining sports projects and forest conservation measures.

Therefore, it is important not only to plant tree seedlings but also to construct environmentally friendly infrastructure in the forest areas. Building sports facilities in tune with nature encourages sustainability while also offering athletes with unique training options. Forested locations are effective training grounds for athletes, giving a tranquil setting suited to concentrated training away from urban distractions.