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## Gov't reiterates on promoting export, global competitiveness

BY ASHENAFI ANIMUT

**ADDIS ABABA** - The government has been exerting unwavering stances to uphold the export trade promotion and global market expansion by conducting reforms, ruling party vice president said.

Prosperity Party Vice President Adem Farah made the above remark on Sunday while officially launching the national trade week being held under the theme "Buy Ethiopian".

Expressing the government's bold steps taken to enhance the global market value chain, he highlighted that it is critical to further catalyze and modernize the export trade and investment system to ensure global competitiveness and spur nation's sustainable development.

Apart from the homegrown and macroeconomic reforms, the government has been undertaking wide ranges of policy and strategy shifts in a bid to create an enabling playfield for the entire business community and private sector's fair competitiveness, Adem remarked.

"The business communities are also highly expected to leverage

*See Gov't reiterates ... page 3*

## Ethiopia announces near-completion of flagship dam

BY YESUF ENDRIS

**ADDIS ABABA** - Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) has congratulated Ethiopians on the near-completion of the Abbay Dam, also known as the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD), describing its current status as a "historical arc" that cannot be reversed.

In a video message, Abiy highlighted Ethiopia's progress on transformative projects like the GERD and the Green Legacy Initiative. "The GERD is a monumental project that everyone should witness. It stands as a powerful lesson for the entire continent of Africa," he stated, urging riparian countries like Sudan and Egypt to support the project.

The Prime Minister emphasized the vast water capacity of the dam, noting it is possible to fill the entire reservoir in just 71 days. He also suggested that constructing additional dams could enhance year-round water flow, benefiting downstream countries.

*See Ethiopia announces ... page 3*

## Floating Exchange Rates: What's next?

BY YESUF ENDRIS

Ethiopia had been under a state-led economy in which the government had a tight control over the economy including currency exchanges. The national currency, Birr, has been depreciating since the government announced macroeconomic reform by scrapping its foreign exchange control to boost FDI, reduce debt and inflation.

What has happened in the aftermath of the announcement of the reforms was the continuous depreciation of the Birr, which has now hit over 40 percent. This has prompted concern. Both concerns and optimistic projections have been arisen from citizens, economists, investors and the business community as the central bank decided not to control the exchange rate.

Economists are also commenting that such

a reform does not necessarily mean that the government would not intervene. "If it feels the exchange rate is perhaps too volatile, it can intervene in the markets," said Financial Risk Analyst, Patricia Rodrigues. It depends on where the Birr currency stands against the USD exchange rate either to buy or sell foreign currency.

To her, the market participants are better able to determine at what rate they should be exchanging on a kind of one-to-one basis. However, she stressed the immediate impact has been really to devalue the currency which grounds potentials for inflation to increase.

"The IMF coming out and saying they had agreed 3.5 or 3.9 billion USD support package to help the government cope with this rising inflation. Essentially, what it is

*See Floating exchange rates ... page 3*



# News

## Healthcare accreditation imperative to improve healthcare: *MoH*

BY MESERET BEHAILU

**ADDIS ABABA** – Healthcare accreditation is mandatory to Ethiopia in order to promoting standard and quality medical services, Ministry of Health (MoH) said, while stipulating predictability, measurable tasks, and technology utilization among requirements.

The above statement was made by MoH's State Minister, Ayele Teshome (MD), at the 3rd quality seminar that was organized yesterday by St. Paul's Hospital Millennium Medical College (SPHMMC) to promote institutional culture, practice and competence.

The seminar discussed the significance of accreditation, patient satisfaction and data management system for decision making and improve medical services.

On the occasion, the State Minister said that accreditation is compulsory to Ethiopia to promote standardized service, quality, excellence, and the likes.



SPHMMC has been carrying out various activities to ensure quality and change institutional culture to satisfy patients. However, the institute requires a well-

established system to achieve the expected goal, according to him.

The institute has been providing fragmented health services for patients thereby

countering some gaps in the area. Therefore, he suggested that it should improve the service delivery by establishing the one-window service mechanism.

Ayele also elaborated that an institute should fulfill predictability, measurable tasks, technology utilization, and the likes to be accredited. It means that accreditation demands continuous improvement of activities to achieve organizational goals.

SPHMMC's Provost, Sisay Sirgu (MD) on his part said that changing the old culture of the institution and brings quality as the first concern in human mind are the main objectives of the seminar.

Sisay noted that accreditation is a drive force in realizing patient care and safety. Accordingly, SPHMMC reiterated commitment to continue the endeavor by drawing lesson from successful partners, bringing technology, producing competent professionals, and the like to improve its service and satisfy patients.

## Society advocates integrated effort to tackle traditional bone setting

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

**ADDIS ABABA**- An integrated approach is needed to minimize or potentially eradicate complications caused by Traditional Bone Setting (TBS), according to the Ethiopian Society of Orthopedics and Traumatology (ESOT).

At an advocacy workshop for media personnel, ESOT President Ephrem Gebrehana emphasized the need for comprehensive research due to the paradoxical relationship between the availability of modern orthopedic care and the high complication rates from TBS. He pointed out that previous studies lacked well-planned designs, which prompted further investigation.

The study, which included 460 pediatric patients under 18 years old, found that children experienced more severe complications and infections compared to adults. It also revealed that 76% of pediatric injuries were due to falls, while road traffic accidents were the major cause of injuries among adults. Additionally, a community-based study in Sidama State found a complication rate of

68% among 860 patients in rural and urban areas

The Ministry of Health Policy, Strategy and Research Lead Executive Officer Endegen Abebe (MD) noted that TBS practices are based on indigenous knowledge. He stressed the need for integrated efforts to balance cultural preservation with the benefits of modern orthopedic care. The study by Bone Setting Associated Disability (BOSAD) is seen as crucial for bridging gaps between policymakers and researchers.

An Advanced Trauma and Arthroplasty Subspecialist Sintayehu Bussa (MD) stated that trauma is a leading cause of morbidity and mortality in Ethiopia, responsible for 10% of deaths and exceeding the total deaths caused by malaria, TB, and HIV/AIDS combined. Major challenges include referral delays, transportation issues, financial constraints, and reliance on traditional medicine. He emphasized the importance of prevention, integrated trauma management, and rehabilitation.

Orthopedic and Pediatric Orthopedic Subspecialist Bekalu Wubshet (MD) called for legal protections for children,



first aid training in schools, and a societal shift towards modern trauma care. He also advocated for reducing or eliminating TBS complications and better monitoring of TBS practices.

Media professionals are urged to create evidence-based content to raise public awareness and promote health, working in collaboration with healthcare facilities. The BOSAD study aims to provide safe,

affordable, and accessible healthcare to all musculoskeletal injury patients, particularly pediatric patients in rural areas.

Data for the study was collected from 1,830 patients at health facilities and over 860 patients in a community-based study across eight university hospitals in six states, including Bahirdar, Assela, Gondar, Jimma, and Addis Ababa, with financial support from AO Alliance.

## Addis-Based Boeing's Africa office to commence operation in October

**ADDIS ABABA** – Addis Ababa-based Boeing's Africa office will begin operations in October, Boeing Africa Managing Director Henok Teferra announced.

Recall that the aerospace company revealed it was in the process of opening its African headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Following the announcement, the Managing Director told ENA that the company's office will officially start its operation in October 2024.

Henok stated that the American aerospace company decided to open its African

headquarters in Addis Ababa considering the successful work Ethiopia is achieving in the aviation sector and its African hub status.

The opening of Boeing Company's African office in Addis Ababa will enable Boeing to further strengthen and expand its cooperation with Ethiopian Airlines in various sectors, he explained.

The opening of the office will also create more opportunities for Ethiopia to strengthen and maintain its status as Africa's aviation center, the Managing Director added.



Boeing will cooperate with Ethiopian Airlines, especially to strengthen cooperation for joint production of aircraft

components, he pointed out.

Boeing and Ethiopian Airlines have formed a strategic partnership to manufacture critical aircraft components in two sectors, he stated, pointing out that Ethiopian Airlines has been manufacturing and supplying wire harnesses for Boeing and Boeing is supporting Ethiopian to produce insulation blankets at the Kilinto Industrial Park in Ethiopia.

As a leading global aerospace company, Boeing develops, manufactures and services commercial airplanes, defense products and space systems.

# News

## Ethiopia's livestock sector set for major overhaul

• Ministry targets doubling productivity by 2024

BY FIKADU BELAY

**ADDIS ABABA** -The Ministry of Agriculture has identified and begun addressing the obstacles preventing Ethiopia's livestock industry from reaching its full potential, the ministry announced.

Agriculture State Minister Fikru Regassa (PhD) highlighted that, despite Ethiopia's large cattle population, production and productivity remain low due to factors such as improper handling techniques, inefficient breeding practices, limited access to quality feed, and prevalent diseases. The ministry is tackling these challenges with a comprehensive approach.

Climate change poses a significant threat to the livestock sector, causing droughts, floods, and the displacement and death of cattle. To combat this, the ministry has installed processing machines to support fodder development in drought-prone areas and is working to improve water access nationwide.

Investing in research and developing high-quality feed formulations, along with promoting sustainable fodder production, is crucial to overcoming these challenges, according to Fikru. Additionally, the ministry is focused on technological advancements to enhance processing capabilities, promoting value addition within the sector to replace imported products with locally manufactured alternatives.

The ministry's efforts are showing promising results under the Limat Tirufat initiative, which aims to double production and productivity from 2022 to 2024. This ambitious goal reflects the government's commitment to transforming the livestock sector into a key driver of economic growth.

To support small-scale producers, the ministry is working to improve market access, facilitate transportation of livestock products to urban centers and export markets, and provide milk processing and

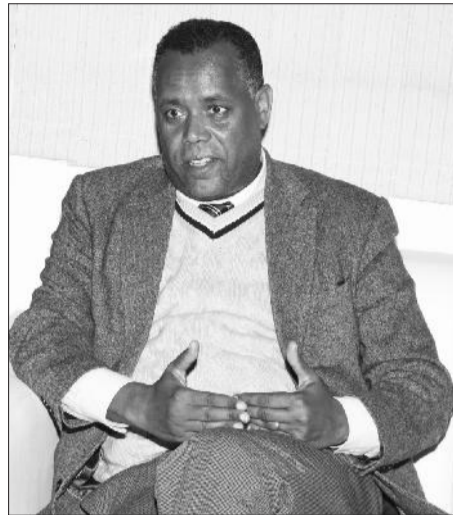


Photo: Gebabo Gebrie

storage facilities to extend the shelf life of dairy products.

Fikru also emphasized the need for investment in training programs and infrastructure to improve livestock handling practices. He suggested focusing on specialized breeds suited to specific environments and market demands to boost productivity.

The ministry previously administered 23 different vaccines annually, costing 102 million Birr, to prevent and control animal diseases. It is also collaborating with relevant bodies to combat smuggling, which poses a threat to the industry.

Achieving these goals requires a collaborative effort from all stakeholders and continued investment in research and development to create new technologies and practices that enhance productivity and resilience in the livestock sector. Fikru underscored the importance of partnerships among government agencies, research institutions, private companies, and others to address the complex challenges facing the sector.

By unlocking the full potential of its livestock resources, Ethiopia aims to transform the sector into a significant contributor to economic growth, food security, and national development.

## Ethiopia announces...

Currently, the dam releases 2,800 cubic meters of water per second, providing more water than usual to downstream nations. "Ethiopia is sharing its resources with other nations for mutual development. If the lower riparian countries manage these resources wisely, it could significantly enhance their development," Abiy remarked. He assured that as further construction progresses, the dam would provide an even better water supply.

Looking ahead, the Prime Minister revealed that by December, the dam is expected to operate at higher capacity as water levels rise and more turbines come online. He mentioned that the dam's bridge is nearing completion, and additional electromechanical components for new turbines will be commissioned soon.

Abiy explained that launching all turbines simultaneously would not be beneficial; instead, a phased approach following technical guidelines is planned. "The dam is now almost completed. Those who invested in efforts to halt its construction have failed. While they may have caused some damage, we have successfully completed the dam. Their resources would have been better spent supporting the project," he asserted.

By the end of the year, more turbines are expected to be operational, boosting power generation. The PM acknowledged the high cost of the project but expressed pride in achieving its ambitious goals, reiterating Ethiopia's commitment to advancing the GERD for national development and regional cooperation.



Photo: Dagne Abera

## Gov't reiterates on ...

the intended opportunities appropriately to benefit themselves and their country which in return promote global competition," he said.

According to him, the government is also exerting maximum efforts to promote the demand and supply to help rein in inflation by taking legal measures on illegal actors in the market value chain.

Urging the business communities to discharge their due responsibility, he said, adding that "Consuming Ethiopian products and services is the real manifestation of patriotism and a means to promote job creation, entrepreneurship, local handicrafts and it is indeed investing in the country we want."

On his part, the Ministry of Trade and Regional Integration (MoTRI) Minister Kassahun Gofe (PhD) stated that the ministry is currently undertaking various research-based policy reforms, legal frameworks to strengthen and

advance the general business ecosystem.

As part of the country's digital journey, several digital platforms are being strictly implemented thereby registering notable outcomes in the sector, he further stated.

So far, the ministry has been facilitating Sunday markets, accounting for 1,066, which directly interconnects merchants with consumers by shortening the market value chain. Also, the open up of retail markets for foreign investors would help promote trade and investment at the required level.

He has also emphasized that it is highly critical to strengthen tech-led trading systems like the newly inaugurated state-of-the-art export commodities display center, which lies on 730 meters square area, which is a significant milestone to expedite the country's export trade facilitation in the international market value chain.

## Floating Exchange rate...

intending to do is subsidize certain food and fuel imports for a little bit of time to allow the market to stabilize," Patricia Rodrigues said.

Fairfax Africa Fund Global Chairman and Invest Africa advisory board member Zemedeneh Negatu, on his part added that the reform has been on the dramatic change in policy regarding the floating exchange rates.

"And that is definitely a big policy change. It happened for the first time in 50 years," he said.

This is actually part of an overall economic transformation of policies that Ethiopian government has been implementing in the last four or five years. This should not be seen as an isolated event, Zemedeneh said, mentioning that the government has introduced homegrown economic reform with multiple pillars so as to enhancing manufacturing, agriculture, ICT and tourism among others.

Ethiopia has craved for economic transformation in the last 15 years and achieved a rapid development led by state-managed economic programs. The east African country has now the fifth largest economy in the continent in terms of agricultural production, GDP.

The Ethiopian economy has grown a lot from where it was about 10 billion USD twenty years ago. So, the baggage that came along with it was something the whole legacy policies needed to be changed and the incumbent was one of the main things, according to Zemedeneh.

"The opening up of the economy to private sector is also one of the long-awaited reforms supporting the growth," he said.

Ethiopia was among the first African countries to introduce telecom services 100 plus years ago. But it is serving nicely since the entrance of Safaricom four years ago - following the sector's liberalization. The same thing will happen in the banking industry as foreigners

are now allowed to enter the Ethiopian market, he added.

One of important things about liberalizing the foreign exchange system is that it may help to lead to greater liquidity, Icap Africa CEO, Duncan Keil believed.

"It is incredibly important that the liquidity is freed up and sadly simply liberalizing foreign exchange does not guarantee more. Liquidity still operates unfortunately a huge trade deficit. And until those changes, the trade surplus is the worrying bit and the inflation caused by the liberalization is likely to see civil unrest as well."

Nigeria was the first to take such action and that was a very brave decision. It would have short-term pain and hopefully for long-term gain, he stated.

"And it is the first step in Ethiopia towards liberalization. Then the banking sector needs to be liberal, and there needs to be the establishment of liquid capital markets. So, it is incredibly positive thing. It is a very exciting time for Africa's big economies though, there's a long way to go," he said.

Forecasting the future prospects, the big losers are the ones who are arbitrating the currency informally. The power of black market though was about double which was depriving the country of the foreign currency it deserves to get, said Zemedeneh.

One of the interesting things happening in the last two and three weeks since the announcement of the liberalization is that the country is now updating exchange rate via banks, which is vital to boost export and stimulate the economy. So, the loser will be the ones who are not adding any value to the economy, he remarked.

"The winners will be, for example, exporters those who operate in the official market and those who need ethics."

# Opinion

## Foiling the rolling back conspiracies of Pretoria Peace Agreement in unison

BY ADDISALEM MULAT

There is no doubt that the federal government of Ethiopia has been making every possible effort to ensure peace and tranquility in every square inch of the country. As peace is the central core of the development of the country, pertinent bodies have been playing a huge role in sowing the seeds of peace and harmony effectuating potential strategies that can pave the way for turning dreams into reality.

As nothing can be accomplished devoid of peace, Ethiopia has been bending over backwards to attain the intended objective and take the country to new benchmarks. No matter what happens, the country leaves no stone unturned to transform the lives of the population at large and turn through the passage of time potential stumbling blocks into steppingstones.

It is worth mentioning that on the heels of the conflict that lasted for two years in the northern part of the country between the federal government and Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), the region was moving into uncharted waters posing danger to its inhabitants. However, through the government's determination and hard work, Ethiopia turned out to be successful in making peace happen in the region once and for all.

Following the Pretoria peace agreement brokered by the African Union, the inhabitants of the region set going breathing a sigh of relief. Apart from getting the northern part of the country on its feet, the residents of the region have jumpstarted leading a meaningful life.

Since the signing of the agreement, the federal government has been speeding up the implementation accordingly the pact in the face of some challenges that need a quick fix.

In the present climate, some groups have been zooming in on moving the country into uncharted territory making use of cock and bull stories that do not reflect that the concrete reality on the ground.

The Government Communication Service (GCS) stated that, the fundamental principle of the Pretoria Agreement is adherence to the constitution and its institutions, according to information obtained from local media. In a statement it issued recently on current affairs of the country, GCS recalled that National Election Board of Ethiopia (NEBE) has recently issued registration of certificate to TPLF as a political party in accordance with the amended election proclamations number 1332/2016 article 2 (1).

It said the government accepts and commends decisions made by constitutional institutions based on legal and institutional freedom as it is the fruits of the ongoing reform. The statement noted that the federal government has been making efforts to facilitate ways for the party regains its status as political party by conducting series



of discussions with the leaders of TPLF and NEBE.

According to NEBE's position in this matter, the only legal alternative available to TPLF is to register as a new party using the same procedures that other newly formed political parties must follow.

However, TPLF argued for recognition as an existing political organization insisting that it is an old political organization. It also claimed that the matter is not only legal but political that requires a particular political decision. Accordingly, to bridge this gap and ensure a peaceful resolution, the government initiated legal reforms to accommodate the TPLF and other similar groups by recognizing the freedom and independence of institutions.

Following these legal amendments, the federal government amended the law and approved by the House of Peoples' Representative. As doomsayers hate to death the development of the country, they work around the clock with a wide spectrum of bodies with a view to backing the country into a corner.

To everyone's dismay, wet blankets that hate to death the prevailing peace in every nook and cranny of the country have sustained distorting facts making use of their usual cooked up stories. Other than bending over backwards to instigate war some worrywarts have been mystifying the inhabitants and the wider international community time and time again.

Taking the self-evident truth into consideration people residing in Tigray region should go to the ends of the earth to thwart the plots of some gloomy forecasters by saying no to bogus news stories and standing by the side of the federal government.

After revising the Election, Political Parties Registration and Code of Conduct Proclamation, the Ministry of Justice communicated the necessary steps for the TPLF to obtain legal status to the NEBE, according to sources.

The government emphasized its proactive

role in facilitating discussions between the NEBE and the TPLF. Therefore, the statement underlined that the government has done everything to resolve the issue of TPLF's legal status.

Election board has requested cooperation to the board in order to register TPLF and gain its legal status and recognition based on the amended law, Government Communication Service indicated.

Accordingly, TPLF has been registered and granted its legal status as a political party based on the amended proclamation after the party submitted its program, bylaw, and other related documents to the National Election Board of Ethiopia.

GCS concluded its statement by calling for cooperation among all stakeholders to prioritize peace, reconstruction, and development. It urged a shift in focus from contentious debates to constructive efforts that benefit the people.

As the country cannot move one step forward devoid of peace, the people of the region should make every possible effort to lay the foundations of peace. As failing to do that will not help attain the envisioned target, everyone should make all possible efforts to put a damper on their evil deeds. It is widely acknowledged that the federal government of Ethiopia is ready to provide the necessary assistance to the people of Tigray working in close association with its partners.

As long as the Pretoria Peace Agreement plays a huge role in oiling the wheels of resolving predicaments came up against the people of Tigray, concerned bodies should join hands and combine efforts. As implementing the agreement is compulsory for making peace happen and taking the Tigray region and the country as a whole to unprecedented heights, each and every one should stand by the side of the federal government without batting an eye.

As the Pretoria peace agreement opens a new chapter for togetherness among the people of Ethiopia and paves the way for making peace happen in the length and breadth of the country. Every Tom, Dick, and Harry should

dig their heels in implementing the pact to bring about the popular goal.

It is generally known that in light of the current situation, the government has been smoothing the path of restoration of social infrastructure, delivery of humanitarian assistance and other related aspects.

The Pretoria Peace Agreement has immensely benefited the Tigray people in enabling them to pursue their daily lives without fear and restoring the damaged social services, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) said.

It is recalled that responding to queries of MPs in the recent past, Abiy highlighted that the accord that was signed in November 2022 with the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) has played a pivotal role in silencing the guns and enabling the Tigray people to access basic services.

The Federal Government's infrastructure renovation projects that have been undertaken in collaboration with the Tigray Interim Administration have enabled the Tigray people to obtain electricity, health, education, telecommunication, air transport and bank services among others.

In addition, the restoration of airports at a cost of about half a billion Birr and the resumption of flights to and from Mekelle, Axum and Shire cities has also relieved the people and saved lives, the Premier underlined.

"The flight resumption is a relief for many. At least it helped critically ill patients to get better treatment here in Addis Ababa."

Noting the resumption of Tigray universities and high schools' enrollment of students, Abiy stressed that this result couldn't be achieved had not it been for the strong and collaborative efforts of the Ministry of Education and the state education bureau.

According to him, the restoration of over 1000 km of optical fibers, 475 Mobile Sites and more than 20,000 landlines as well as Ethio-telecom's launching of 4G telecom service in 10 cities at a cost of more than 100 million Birr is another success gained after the Pretoria Agreement.

Since time immemorial, the people of Ethiopia have been addressing their predicaments peacefully by forestalling skirmishes through round table discussions. Given the current circumstances, Ethiopia's opponents that are disenchanted with the agreement on cessation of hostilities and its implementation have been spearheading promising trends.

As implementing the Pretoria Peace Agreement is the only way out to ensure peace and tranquility throughout the nation, people from all walks of life should give the cold shoulder to scaremongers' plot working day in and day out to tarnish the image of the country.

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

# Editorial

## Towards thriving clean energy basis

The financial spring stretched ranging from a wrapped tiny rag of street vending poor woman to the fatten purse of high profile investors and pumped into the construction of the Grand Abbay Dam started bearing fruits. Thanks to the relentless effort of all Ethiopians, energy revolution, clean energy of course, institutes! Yes, perseverance and hard work pay off.

Following administration determination and firm public commitment, Ethiopia has been in a position to compete the construction of a dam that generates a huge amount of clean energy in Africa using its own financial muscle. True, the country is arduously working to make its lack of electricity history and avert an economic lag that in turn has left the country in a precarious situation.

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed has recently launched the 3rd and 4th turbines at the Grand Abbay Dam and stated that the dam will significantly boost hydropower generation, clean energy production as well as bolstering agricultural productivity. The launch of these turbines is indeed a major milestone for Ethiopia as it aims at regulating water flow, reducing flood risks, and ensuring a reliable water supply for neighboring nations, too.

Turbines going operational would add value to the clean energy production on which the country has been capitalizing. Yes, the dam's promise of regular electricity is as potent symbol of change in Ethiopia. Needless to state, so far economic growth in Ethiopia has been stifled by a lack of electricity and the industrial progress margins are hollowed out by the nightmare of unpredictable power cuts almost on a daily basis.

Such devastating circumstances have to be well turned away these days since Ethiopia is advancing towards growth and transformation via effectively utilizing its water resources such as damming the River Abbay.

Momentously, the disagreements among Egypt, Sudan and Ethiopia over the dam, which is located on the Blue Nile River in Ethiopia, close to the border with Sudan, have to be peacefully resolved for this natural resource would suffice for all, and it needs to be a source of amicable way and collaboration instead of being source of enmity and confrontation.

The final stages of construction have definitely been well underway as all the fillings took step by step and now the four turbines have gone operational. This promising move has to be praised by all concerned and a dispute between Ethiopia and downstream nations peculiarly Egypt and Sudan over the construction of the dam which has dragged on for 12 years, needs to be reined at some point. To this end thus all these nations have to come together and devise possible solutions appreciating a win-win fashion.

The dam unequivocally plays a crucial role in managing water flow, mitigating flood risks, and ensuring that downstream nations receive a steady supply of water. As this carefully regulated water of the dam will significantly enhance agricultural productivity, boost power generation, and improve resource utilization throughout the region, due attention has to be attached to it.

As to the Premier, the turbines are of paramount importance in enhancing water flow and regional resource management, and they started power generation and the 3 additional units of the dam will start power generation after four months. This is really a good news emerged from Guba for the lower Abbay basin countries as the dam plays a crucial role in boosting clean energy, renewable source of power and flood risk mitigation.

In sum, with the launch of the new turbines, Ethiopia is poised to become a significant energy producer in Africa. The dam is expected to generate over 6,000 megawatts of electricity, which will not only meet domestic demands but also allow for energy exports to neighboring countries. This shift will foster clean energy production, regional cooperation and economic growth. The Grand Abbay Dam is set to provide numerous advantages for Ethiopia and its neighbors. To mention but a few, it would improve agricultural productivity through regulated water supply, enhance power generation capacity for regional energy needs, mitigate flood risks in downstream areas, among others.

# Opinion

## Unleashing the power of collective thinking in Ethiopia to promote National Dialogue

BY SOLOMON DIBABA

Many Ethiopians think that people are good or bad mannered because of the way they are brought up. Indeed there is a grain of truth in this attribution but it is difficult to generalize the nature of human behavior only from a single perspective as there is more to it. Some attribute conflicting behavior or hatred, biases and stereotypes and destitution to a specific social orientation which are all subjective manifestations of poverty and under development. Again, there is some truth in this but there is more to human behavior and one cannot explain the case in just a single phrase or sentence.

Human pattern of thinking, be it individual or collective is based on the individual and social needs, interests, values and attitudes that are manifested both in individual and collective pattern of thinking. Why did the author take up this issue at this point in time? The issue of promoting collective thinking emanates from the fact that we all have common denominations that hinges around our desire for survival, peace, development and healthy lifestyle.

Collective thinking refers to the process by which groups of people work together to generate ideas solve problems, or make decisions. This type of thinking emphasizes collaboration, pooling knowledge, and leveraging diverse perspectives to achieve a common goal. It is commonly used in settings such as organizational decision-making, community problem-solving and social movements.

The convocation of National Dialogue in Ethiopia incidentally requires a process of positive and collective thinking in which representatives of the people of Ethiopia come under one roof at all levels to develop their own agenda on issues of national significance pertaining to restoration of peace and socio-economic development and creation of inclusive, participatory and democratic political order in the country.

Collaboration is one aspect of collective thinking. Members of a group contribute their unique insights, experiences, and knowledge, creating a richer and more informed outcome than what could be achieved individually. This approach is very important for peace and sustainable development in Ethiopia because the result of collective thinking in the form of a national dialogue creates a favorable condition for civil nationalism and multi-ethnic democratic order. Collaboration promotes not only collective thinking but also owning the positive ideas generated to ensure nationwide progress towards development and prosperity.

Collective thinking benefits from the inclusion of diverse viewpoints, which helps to identify potential blind spots and generates more creative solutions for

the age old challenges that Ethiopia has continued to face. Moreover, collective thinking accommodates multiple sets of views which indicate the participatory and inclusive nature of Ethiopia's national dialogue program.

For collective thinking to be effective, there needs to be a shared objective or purpose that all participants are working towards. In this context, all Ethiopians here and overseas need to work towards shared objectives of nation building, peace and winning the battle against poverty, under development and over dependence on foreign assistance.

Transparent and open communication is crucial in collective thinking, allowing for the free flow of ideas and constructive feedback. This would in turn help to develop on the traditional values of respect, tolerance which could develop into a new culture of mutual acceptance and appreciation for the country's socio-political assets.

The outcome of collective thinking often involves consensus-building, where the group agrees on the best course of action after considering all contributions. This is a learning process in which the participants can gain knowledge from each other, reflect on the outstanding challenges of the country and solicit pertinent solutions.

What are the advantages of collective thinking for promoting national dialogue?

By bringing together different perspectives, collective thinking can lead to more innovative solutions that can be acceptable among the vast majority of the population in the country.

When people are involved in the decision-making process, they are more likely to support and commit to the outcomes and work together for their accomplishments.

Groups can tackle complex problems more effectively by pooling their knowledge and skills. If not managed properly, collective thinking can lead to conformity and suppress dissenting opinions, which can hinder innovation. It can be challenging to coordinate the contributions of all group members effectively, especially in large or diverse groups.

Collective thinking is a powerful tool for harnessing the strengths of a group to achieve more effective and inclusive outcomes. However, it requires careful facilitation to ensure that all voices are heard and that the group does not fall into the trap of group thinking.

Ethiopians may have difference of opinion on so many issues. Given the socio-economic and political diversity in the country, this is natural and acceptable. However, they would certainly agree on the major issues, concerns, and challenges that affect their country and the livelihood of all citizens here and abroad.

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



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The Ethiopian Herald

# Business & Economy

## Towards recording better economic growth

BY MENGESHA AMARE

It is well comprehended that inward-looking approaches are quite important for resilience and help the nation have higher per capita income and bounce back better from shocks. Policymakers have played a paramount role in balancing growth, innovation, inclusion, sustainability and resilience. Hence, Ethiopia needs a higher level of urgency and ambition to rewire growth for this new era. Policymakers, line ministries, financial institutions, industries, trade runners, and other stakeholders have to focus on the means to bolster economic advancement.

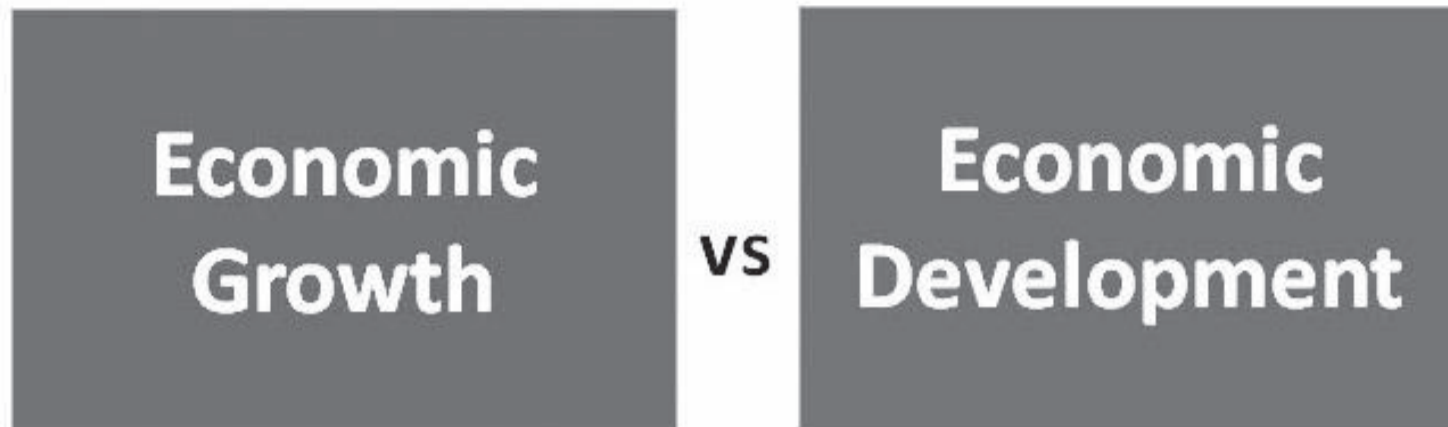
Cognizant of the fact that, economic growth can be attributable to a number of factors, *The Ethiopian Herald* had a stay with Arega Adolla, an economist graduated from Arba-Minch University in agro-economics, to have ample information about the national comprehensive effort to get economic grow.

He said, “The rate of economic growth refers to the geometric annual rate of growth in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) between the first and the last year over a period of time. Economic growth-rates of countries are commonly compared using the ratio of the GDP to population (per-capita income). In simplest terms, economic growth refers to an increase in aggregate production in an economy, which generally manifests as a rise in national income. That leads to an increase in incomes, inspiring consumers to open up their wallets and buy more and driving a higher material quality of life and standard of living.”

In economics, growth is commonly modeled as a function of physical capital, human capital, labor, and technology. Increasing the quantity or quality of the working-age population, the tools that they have to work with, and the recipes that they have available to combine labor, capital, and raw materials will lead to increased economic output.

This creates opportunities for trade in services from developing economies that are still largely untapped, partly because of low digitalization. Digitalization rates across advanced and developing economies are diverging rather than converging, leading to persistent economic divides and missed opportunities for innovation, he said.

As to him, the most common measure of economic growth is real GDP. This is the total value of all goods and services produced in an economy, with that value adjusted to remove the effects of inflation. Another problem is that not all individuals place the same value on the same goods and services. Adding capital to the economy tends to increase the productivity of labor. Newer, better, and more tools mean that workers can



produce more output per time period.

There are three different methods for looking at real GDP. Someone in the economy must first engage in some form of saving in order to free up the resources to create the new capital. In addition, the new capital must be of the right type, in the right place, and activated at the right time for workers to actually use it productively, he suggested.

The second method of promoting economic growth is through technological improvements, Arega said adding that prior to the discovery of its energy-generating power, improved technology allows workers to produce more output with the same stock of capital goods by combining them in novel ways that are more productive. Another way to generate economic growth is to grow the labor force. All else being equal, more workers generate more economic goods and services. True, he said economic growth was due to a high influx of cheap, productive labor. However, as with capital-driven growth, there are some key conditions to this process.

In the simplest terms, economic growth means that more will be available to more people, and how economic growth is used to fuel social progress matters. Taxes affect economic growth, at least in the short term, through their impact on demand. Economic growth is generally measured in terms of GDP and is an indicator of the economic health of a country. However, how widely the fruits of the growth are shared is an important factor in its sustenance, not to mention societal health and progress, Arega said.

He added, “Good health, a place to live, access to education, nutrition, social connections, respect, peace, human rights, a healthy environment, and happiness are born to sustainable and stable economic growth. These are just some of the many aspects we care about in our lives. Poverty, prosperity, and growth are often measured in monetary terms, most commonly as citizens’ income.”

As to him, economic growth is an increase in the production of goods and services in an economy. Increases in capital goods, labor force, technology, and human capital can all contribute to economic growth and sustainable development. It describes how much an entity, such as a

country, is increasing and improving the goods and services it produces.

“Understanding whether an economy is getting bigger or smaller is important not only to economists but also to public- and private-sector leaders, as well as to individuals. That’s because economic growth usually indicates that people and businesses are earning and spending more and generally feeling better off.”

Arega further elucidated that, economic growth is difficult to measure accurately. Traditionally, GDP has been considered the best indicator of a country’s economic growth because it accounts for the country’s entire economic output, including goods and services sold both domestically and internationally. A more holistic measure is needed to get a better sense of an economy’s growth and prospects.

“Economic growth is an increase in the amount of goods and services that an economy produces. Economic growth results in rising wages and higher standards of living for citizens, measured as increases in real gross domestic product (GDP); it allows a society to increase its consumption of goods and services. In short, economic growth reduces the sting of scarcity—the condition that exists because there are not enough resources to quench every citizen’s desires.

He said, “More capital, more labor, and better use of existing capital or labor are the three factors that can be potentially attributable to bring about economic growth. The growth that results from increases in capital and labor represents growth due to increases in inputs and other related necessary ingredients.”

Arega said, “Increasing investment in physical capital allows for continued increases in productivity and economic growth. A well-educated workforce is also generally more productive, providing higher output per worker. Well-educated workers can make the most efficient use of existing technologies. The innovation resulting from new ideas is a key to continued technological progress.”

He further stated that in addition to productivity-boosting factors such as physical and human capital, economies with high rates of economic growth often share characteristics related to economic institutions that support or reward

productive activity.

Free trade extends the benefits of free markets beyond national borders and allows for more competition within industries, which provides additional productivity gains. Well-developed financial markets are thus essential ingredients for long-run economic growth, he added.

Basically, Ethiopia is continually seeking ways to stimulate economic growth as a means of providing jobs and improving living standards. Examples include the development of tools and machinery, and aggregation of labor and businesses in urban settings, and the division of production processes into multiple stages handled by different workers. Such innovation increases productivity – enabling society to maximize the economic returns on finite inputs of labor and resources.

“Rapid economic growth is a comparatively recent phenomenon. Equally, economic performance shapes the revenues available to governments and, correspondingly, the resources available for public infrastructure and services such as education, healthcare and various forms of social security.”

Economic growth in both developing and developed regions is also associated with social and economic harm that threatens to undermine improvements in living standards.

In sum, economic growth has to be achieved at it is not only a rate but also a direction. Besides, economic growth is not the only thing that matters, but it does matter. It is because a person has more choices as their prosperity grows that economists care so much about growth.

Rising prosperity gives people access to a wide range of things they value: food, healthcare, and access to education, entertainment, holidays, free time, and more. It is because of this, that it is so important to track how economic growth has changed nation’s status quo.

Similarly, improvements in labor quality like human knowledge, skill, and training are both a carrier of and a spur to technological change. Hence, within each of the basic factors of production, technology often takes an embodied form thereby boosting the national economy.

# In the Sphere of Diplomacy

## Green diplomacy: The new frontier

BY EYUEL KIFLU

The issue of climate change continues to be a topic of intense debate, with no clear or sustainable solutions emerging. Countries around the world are being forced to grapple with the burdens and challenges posed by the impacts of climate change. The problem is particularly serious in developing and underdeveloped nations, which often lack the resources and infrastructure to effectively adapt and mitigate the effects.

Despite numerous global summits and conferences held over the years, a core, universally accepted solution to the climate crisis has remained vague. As a result, vulnerable countries are struggling to tackle this scary challenge, resorting to a variety of actions and initiatives in an effort to address the problem.

One of the mechanisms being employed to address the issues arising from climate change is the planting of trees. In this regard, Ethiopia has been actively working on this initiative, especially over the last five years, by planting around over thirty two billion seedlings. These seedlings are being planted under the “Green Legacy initiative,” which was launched in 2019.

The initiative involves the planting of trees, fruits, and cattle feed seedlings not only to restore green cover but also to create jobs and ensure food security in Ethiopia. The country is currently exporting fruits such as avocado, papaya, and mango in the region, thanks to the Green Legacy Initiative.

The Green Legacy Initiative (GLI) has continued to gather momentum, with the latest push taking place on August 23, 2024. On that day, Ethiopians from all walks of life participated in a nationwide tree-planting campaign, with the ambitious goal of planting 600 million saplings in a single day. Aftermath, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) confirmed that a record-breaking 615.7 million tree seedlings were indeed planted across 318.4 hectares of geospatially mapped sites throughout the country.

The Green Legacy Initiative has also caught the attention of the international community. Various diplomatic representatives based in Addis Ababa have been actively involved in the country’s tree-planting efforts. This suggests that Ethiopia is not only working to address its domestic climate challenges, but is also engaging in “green diplomacy” using its environmental initiatives as a means of fostering international cooperation and collaboration.

The experience gained by Ethiopia in its tree-planting efforts has also been shared with other countries, as evidenced by the country’s participation in a knowledge-sharing event in the 2023 United Nations Climate Change Conference, COP28, which was the 28th United Nations Climate Change Conference at Expo City Dubai last year. This further underscores Ethiopia’s commitment to positioning itself as a global leader in the fight against climate change.

In a display of environmental stewardship,



Ethiopia’s efforts to green the country have gained international recognition and support. As part of the country’s Green Legacy Initiative, launched by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD), various government and diplomatic representatives have joined in tree-planting campaigns across the nation.

In the capital city of Beijing, Tefera Derebew, Ethiopia’s Ambassador to China, along with embassy staff, participated in a tree-planting initiative, demonstrating Ethiopia’s commitment to the Green Legacy. Similarly, in Addis Ababa Alexander Evstigneev, Director of the Russian Center for Science and Culture expressed his support for Ethiopia’s environmental sustainability efforts. Evstigneev emphasized the significance of this historic national moment and pledged to help ensure the survival of the trees he planted, underscoring the importance of both community and governmental efforts in creating a greener Ethiopia.

Evstigneev praised Ethiopia’s efforts to enhance its green legacy, particularly through the restoration of forest coverage and natural resources. He noted that, the GLI and the tree-planting event symbolize Ethiopia’s dedication to leaving a thriving, sustainable environment for future generations.

Leaders and staff of the Ethiopian Embassy in Abidjan, Côte d’Ivoire, also joined the tree-planting efforts, with Ethiopia’s Ambassador to that country, Shitaye Minale, taking part in the initiative.

The U.S. Ambassador to Ethiopia, Irvine Masinga, highlighted the importance of the GLI for increasing agricultural productivity and preventing soil erosion in low-lying areas of the country. He affirmed that, the U.S. government would continue to support Ethiopia’s land and forest protection initiatives in collaboration with various stakeholders.

The Danish Embassy in Addis Ababa also

underscoring the significance of such actions to mitigate climate change.

Furthermore, experts who attended the 46th meeting of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Least Developed Countries Expert Group (LEG) in Addis Ababa between August 19 and 22, 2024, praised Ethiopia’s dedication to undertake substantial environmental protection activities to achieve sustainable development.

Maria Ashili, an expert from the United States, said that Ethiopia’s commitment to combat climate change impacts through the Green Legacy Initiative is encouraging and a good example to the world. She noted that the country’s pledge to plant 600 million seedlings in a single day will contribute significantly to global efforts.

Gabriel Kapaka, a Sierra Leonean expert, expressed that the actions taken by the government and people of Ethiopia regarding environmental protection are encouraging, and it is the responsibility of all to continue this effort. He explained that tree planting is an international activity, and Ethiopia’s extensive undertaking of such work contributes to global efforts to reduce global warming.

Ethiopia’s commitment to environmental sustainability and its Green Legacy Initiative have garnered worldwide attention and support, positioning the country as a role model in the fight against climate change.

The issue of climate change remains a complex and multifaceted challenge, with no easy solutions. However, the efforts of countries like Ethiopia, through initiatives such as the Green Legacy, demonstrate that concerted, large-scale action can make a meaningful difference. As the world continues to grapple with the impacts of climate change, the experiences and lessons learned from Ethiopia’s tree-planting campaign may provide valuable insights and inspiration for other nations seeking to tackle this pressing global issue.

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expressed its participation in the tree-planting campaign, noting their pride in collaborating with Ethiopia to combat climate change. They reiterated their contribution to Addis Ababa’s goal of planting twenty million trees this year, in alignment with the national target of increasing forest cover to 30 per cent by 2030.

The Green Legacy Initiative aims to plant 7.5 billion seedlings nationwide this year, and CorpsAfrica volunteers have joined Ethiopians in the tree-planting campaign,

# Law & Politics

## Ethiopia's eyes are on the prize

BY DANIEL ALEMAYEHU

Ethiopia has long been waiting to live up to its vast yet untapped water potential. Though some actors use the term to pull the nation down from using its natural water resources, the country still has potential when it comes to achieving set objectives. When Ethiopia commits itself to using its resources, it is obvious that there will be no force to stop it from doing it and again there will always be pressure. And, that is at least what happened in the last decade when the country started a grand dam in Abbay River.

Fortunately, the country is blessed with both manpower and natural resources. Utilizing once natural resources is the right of the country, and Ethiopia has full power to use its resources. Utilizing the Blue Nile or the Abbay River is Ethiopia's choice, but there is no option. Having more than 120 million people, Ethiopia must work on the resources on hand.

When Ethiopia announced the news of the inception of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) back in 2011, the country encountered a number of pressures from various directions. The country stated boldly that, the sole reason for constructing the dam is not about affecting the lower riparian; rather it is to light up its people who lead their life in the dark.

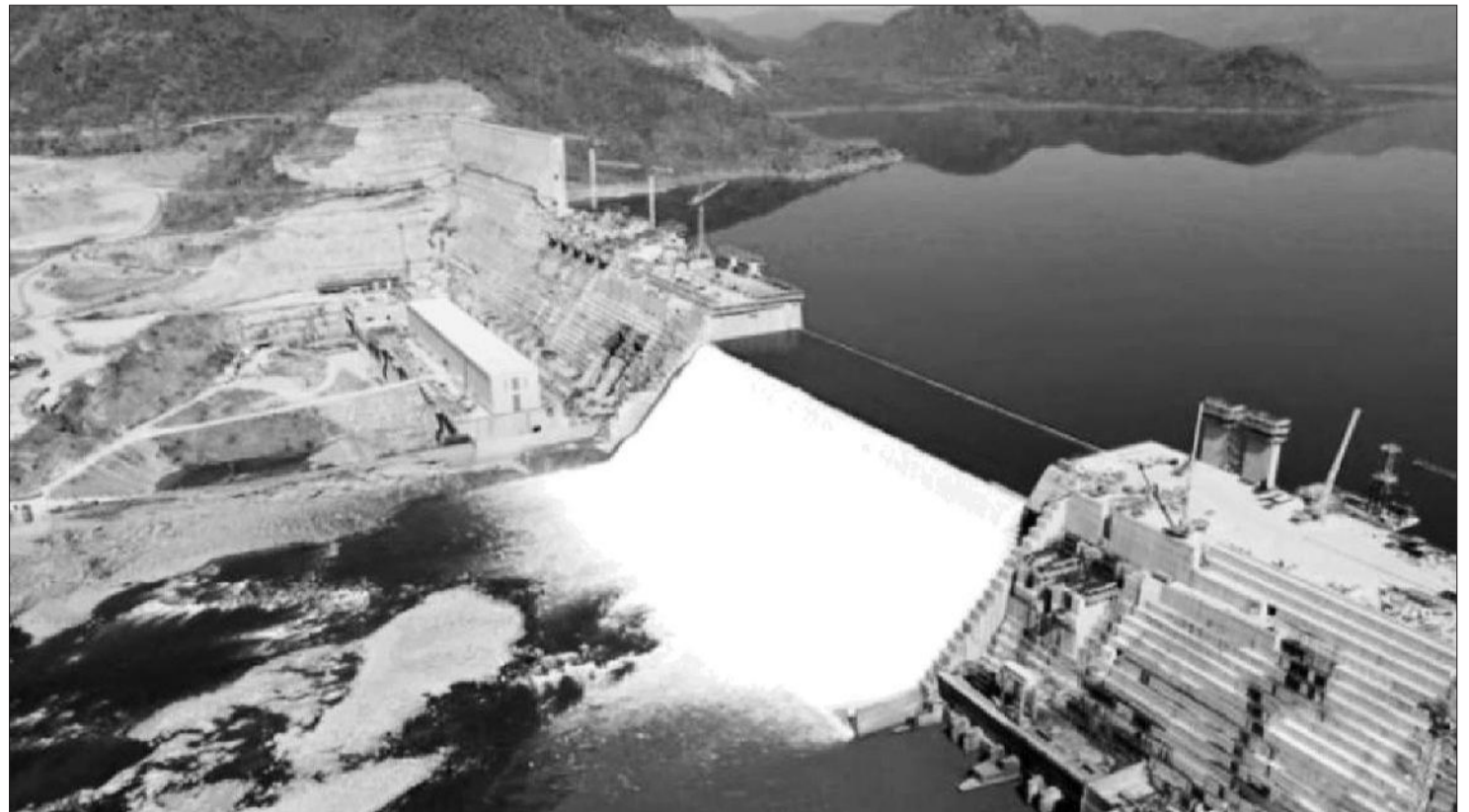
The GERD is believed to be a means for lifting millions of people out of poverty providing access to electricity to more than 60 million Ethiopians and providing affordable electricity to the service, industrial, and agriculture economic sectors.

The Abbay Dam which is located in Ethiopia- Sudan border is storing more than 74 billion MC water. The dam will benefit Ethiopia and the two downstream riparian nations, Sudan and Egypt, especially in the times of drought. It will also regulate the water flow and support the downstream riparian countries to manage the resource effectively.

Besides, it is important to be aware that the dam will be one of the mechanisms for reducing and tackling human's worst challenge, climate change. The dam will further capture 90% of the sediment protecting irrigation canals and equipment from damages caused by sedimentation.

Again, GERD will support the water flow arriving at the High Aswan Dam (HAD) of Egypt. With GERD operating upstream, average annual HAD evaporation losses will be tremendously reduced. Due to regulated and increased flows a longer period of navigation on the Nile River will be possible.

On top of that, with its current hydroelectric power, Ethiopia has also become one of the power suppliers in the Horn as the nation has recently started to sell its electric power to neighboring nations such as Kenya, Sudan, and Djibouti. Working on implementing a green economy, Ethiopia,



nowadays, is using electricity as one of income income-generating ways. When the dam is fully completed, it will definitely increase Ethiopia's electric power supply and the powerhouse in East Africa.

At some point, in the case of Sudan, the downstream nation, Ethiopia has not received any payment for its electric power supply services due to the ongoing war in Sudan. Conversely, Ethiopia is waiting for the government of Sudan patiently to pay its bill without stopping the service rather than reducing it. Such an act of partnership has great implications for regional integration and collective growth.

When the nation determines to use its resources, some historic enemies of the country start to work to abort the mission. Such actions were seen when Ethiopia declared to build its mega project on the Abbay River. Understanding the upcoming pressures, the government of Ethiopia, back then, determined to finance the dam only by Ethiopians from all over the world. It is known that if Ethiopia asked any international financial organizations for any financial support, it would have no chance of receiving it. In fact, the dam took years behind its commission, but the people and government of Ethiopia are still showing their unwavering commitment to its completion.

Accordingly, Ethiopia is one of the powerhouse and resource centers in the Horn of Africa as the country has been involved in major regional actions. On the other hand, some actors who do not want to see Ethiopia be successful and developed are working day and night to tarnish the nation's popularity.

Those enemies of Ethiopia have left no stone unturned to stop the country from its success. The downstream nations, especially Egypt have gone too far to stop Ethiopia from the construction as its officials certainly know that the dam will cause no

**The GERD is believed to be a means for lifting millions of people out of poverty providing access to electricity to more than 60 million Ethiopians and providing affordable electricity to the service, industrial, and agriculture economic sectors**

harm to the people of Egypt. They used the issue for their political leverage. They even warned Ethiopia that they could wage a war.

The government of Egypt reportedly tried to pay a huge sum of money to some government officials in the United States of America to push hard on Ethiopia. The case which was reported to say 10 million USD was paid for Donald Trump, former US president from the government of Egypt so that the US would back Egypt to stop Ethiopia.

Similarly, the downstream nations had also tried to bring the issue to other blocs, like the Arab League which is stirred by Egypt. On the other hand, as the pioneer member of the African Union, Ethiopia believes that

African problems should be resolved by African solutions, and called for the African Union to mediate any issue concerning the Abbay Dam. This shows that some actors do not even trust the AU and its power to settle things in the continent.

In addition, those enemies of Ethiopia have been doing everything to disturb the country and got involved in any scenario that negatively affects Ethiopia. A simple example might be the recent disagreement between Ethiopia and Somalia when countries like Egypt started to act as a shield for Somalia without any sacrifice like the Ethiopians did to their neighbors.

With all the bumpy roads that Ethiopia has been going through, the country has never stopped recording success regarding the dam. According to the official Prime Minister Office social media page, on Saturday, the 3rd and 4th turbines of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam are being operational.

PM office page stated that more good news has emerged from Guba, where the dam is located, for the lower Abbay basin countries. Along with the uninterrupted flow of the river, the dam's spillways have been opened, releasing an additional 2,800 cubic meters of water per second.

“The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) plays a crucial role in managing water flow, mitigating flood risks, and ensuring that downstream nations receive a steady supply of water, particularly during droughts. This carefully regulated release will significantly enhance agricultural productivity, boost power generation, and improve resource utilization throughout the region.”

To wrap up the idea, there is a saying: ‘Barking dogs that bark for the sake of straining the leash are nothing but a nuisance.’ Likewise, Ethiopia walks the talk regarding the dam amidst the challenges that its historic enemies creating.



# Society

## Making a bright future through reintegration

BY MENGISTEAB TESHOME

The long-term success of rehabilitating returnees highly hinges on their ability to reintegrate into the economy, have meaningful employment opportunities, and become self-sufficient economically. At the same time, it requires a strategic approach that addresses the skills gap by crafting jobs tailored to their needs.

In this regard, the Ministry of Labor and Skills joining hands with stakeholders and partners has been working to address and resolve the complex challenges in an organized fashion. In turn, in the concluded Ethiopian budget year, it was possible to create employment opportunities for over twenty-eight thousand citizens repatriated from overseas.

Labor and Skills State Minister Solomon Soka told ENA that, in the concluded Ethiopian budget year, encouraging activities were carried out to create job opportunities for returnees at home. More than 28,000 returnees have benefitted from the jobs created locally.

According to him, the achievements were possible following the provision of training and skills development programs being tailored based on demand and designed to fill the gap in skill of the returnees, and linking the job opportunities with small and medium enterprises and industries as well as facilitating opportunities to work in their profession.

In addition, he further noted that 345 thousand citizens were deployed legally overseas at the ended budget year after receiving the needed occupational and skills development training.

He also stated a plan to deploy 700 thousand citizens for foreign countries' employment opportunities in the current Ethiopian budget year, and various activities are ongoing in coordination with regional states and stakeholders.

Job Opportunity Creation and Vocational Bureau Deputy Head at Oromia State; Wasihun Golga on his part announced that, the State has created job opportunities for 11,328 returnees. 312 million birr loan has also been given to returnees as seed capital to rehabilitate and commence their own business. What is more, efforts are applied to make them operational by providing them with counseling services and short-term business training on how to manage the business and engage in productive activities. Furthermore, 243 working and selling market places were given to ease the challenges raised in this regard, he added.

In addition to this, joining hands with non-governmental organizations and institutions, and building production and selling sites in Jimma, Bale Robe, and Nekemte towns, the Bureau delivered to returnees.

In addition, the same efforts are being made to engage returnees in the "Ye-Lemat Tirufat" program, especially in poultry, and dairy farming for the production of milk and in urban agriculture, he added.



In an exclusive interview with Mulatu Gebremariam, a Sociologist who has been working on a joint project carried out by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) on reintegration for about five years, said that repatriates often face with challenges of being accepted by their respective communities. To address the social and psychological challenges faced by returnees, concerted efforts should be exerted in terms of counseling, support groups, and community outreach programs.

"Through providing training and consultative services, and undertaking effective reintegration program, we can heal the trauma; support them to understand the psychological makeup of the wider community and to deal with life effectively."

According to him, creating job opportunities demands huge capital, resources, and expertise as well as the active involvement of development partners and community leaders. Applying effective social reintegration schemes and putting the needs and interests of the returnees at the forefront is a crucial step toward building a more inclusive and productive society. Thus, stakeholders should organize community engagement involving local communities in the reintegration process like fostering a welcoming environment and reducing social stigma.

Efforts should be put in place to review and revise labor laws and regulations to create a more inclusive and supportive environment for returning migrants, he recommended.

According to him, it is important to conduct thorough assessments to identify the specific skills gaps and the needs. Through this approach, it is possible to make returnees productive and improve the lives of their own and their respective family.

Investing in training and job creation for returnees is not just about providing temporary relief; it should be considered as the most significant task to create a more resilient community and ensure an inclusive economy. The stakeholders should keep on adhering to bridging the skills gap and creating opportunities for these segments of society.

In a related development, the Ministry of Labor and Skills (MoLS) announced that, it has been working to create 4.9 million jobs both domestically and abroad, in this Ethiopian budget year.

At a half-day forum organized by the Ministry, in collaboration with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the Ethiopian Outsourcing Association (EOA), under the theme "Creating Jobs for the Future: Uncovering the Key Drivers for the Growth of Ethiopia's Outsourcing Industry," works are ongoing to tackling unemployment, which remains a significant challenge in the country.

MoLS State Minister Solomon Soka emphasized that the government is taking proactive measures to ensure millions of Ethiopian citizens secure employment opportunities both locally and overseas. In the previous fiscal year, MoLS facilitated job placements for 3.7 million people, including 345,000 workers who found employment abroad.

However, the State Minister acknowledged that the unemployment rate remains alarmingly high, highlighting the critical role that the outsourcing industry could play in addressing this issue. Solomon cited the example of the United States, which generated over 500 million USD in revenue from the 14.3 million jobs created through outsourcing in 2021. This, he argued, demonstrates the

potential for Ethiopia to leverage outsourcing as a key driver for job creation and foreign currency inflows.

Highlighting the high priority digital economy is receiving globally; he said that digital technologies are instrumental in accelerating economic growth by connecting people, governments, and businesses.

The digital sector has not only created opportunities for citizens to get services easily but also enables them to get jobs through outsourcing, the State Minister noted.

For developing countries like Ethiopia, the outsourcing industry will create huge opportunities as more than 2 million new job seekers enter the market each year.

The outsourcing industry has huge job opportunities, Solomon stated, adding that producing trained and qualified human resources is instrumental to properly exploiting the market.

The collaboration of all stakeholders, including the government, the private sector, and partners, is crucial to make Ethiopia the center of the outsourcing industry, the state minister emphasized.

Recalling improvements in infrastructure, internet connectivity, and the priority given by the government, he pointed out that a joint effort of all stakeholders is needed to make Ethiopia the center of outsourcing.

Ethiopian Outsourcing Association President, Wondwesen Zewde said the attention given to digital economic development and technology transformation is commendable

He stressed the need for collaboration of the government, the private sector, and development partners to properly exploit the outsourcing market.

# International News

## South Sudan, Chinese firm sign deal to construct modern oil refinery

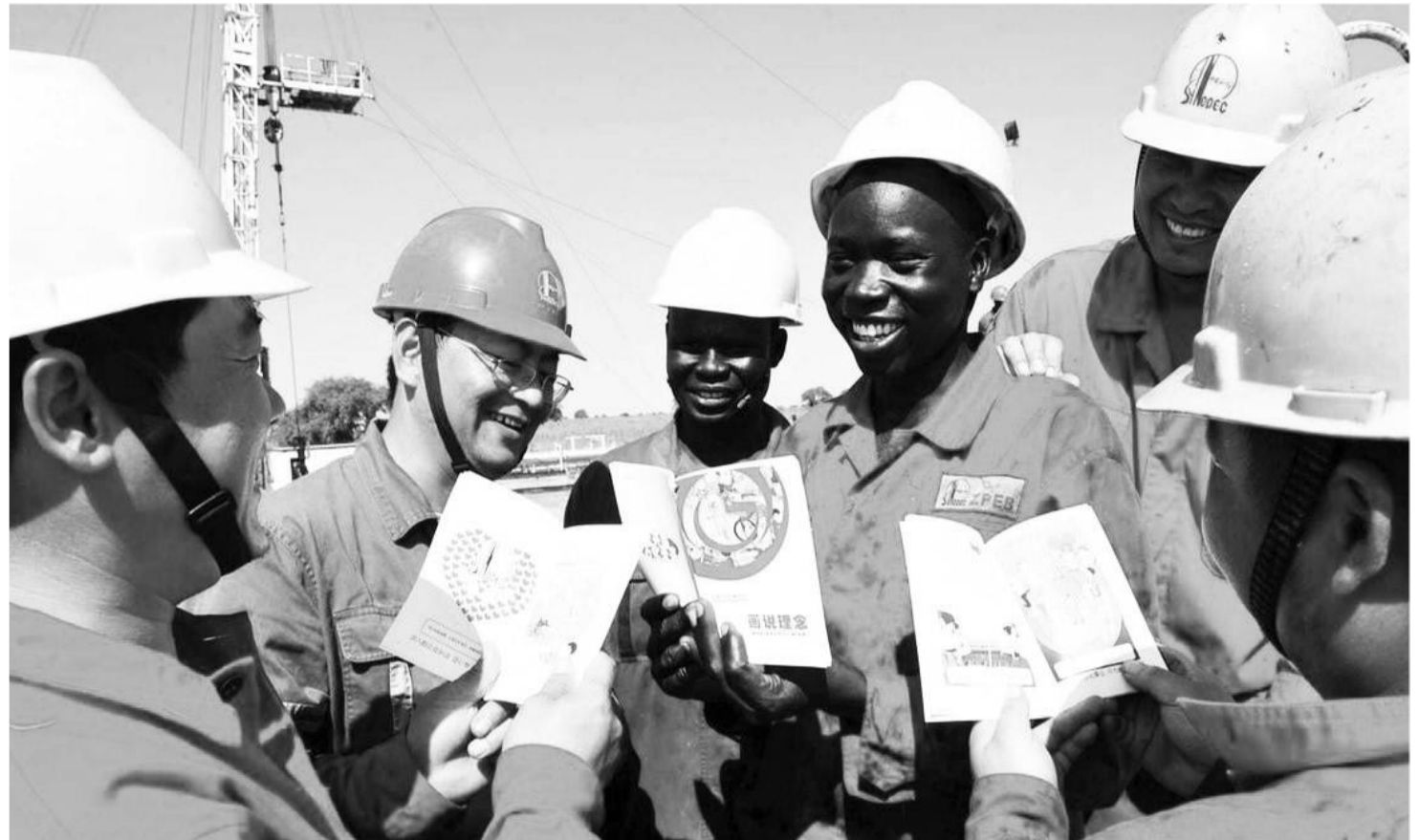
Chinese firm Shengli Oilfield Keer Engineering and Construction Company (Sokec) on Friday signed an agreement with South Sudan's state-owned Nile Petroleum Corporation (Nilepet) to construct modern oil refinery and storage facilities in South Sudan.

President of Sokec Wu Song and Managing Director of Nilepet Muhammad Lino Benjamin signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) which will see the Chinese firm immediately begin investing in South Sudan.

Benjamin hailed Sokec for its contribution to the development of the youngest nation in Africa.

"With this MoU, we hope you will be able to translate it into agreements and projects that we will do together," he said at the signing ceremony in Juba, the capital of South Sudan.

Wu said Sokec will embark on investment without hesitation, aiming to enhance production capabilities and operational efficiency.



*Source: capital newspaper* Chinese and Sudanese workers read cartoon books in an oil field in the District 3/7, South Sudan October 27, 2010. PHOTO | POOL

## Africa: Global Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan Launched by WHO to Contain Mpox Outbreak

The World Health Organization (WHO) today launched a global Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan to stop outbreaks of mpox through coordinated global, regional, and national efforts. This follows the declaration of a public health emergency of international concern by the WHO Director-General on 14 August.

The current plan is subject to inputs by Member States, who were briefed on the plan on Friday, 23 August.

The plan covers the six-month period of September 2024-February 2025, envisioning a US\$135 million funding need for the response by WHO, Member States, partners including Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC), communities, and researchers, among others.

A funding appeal for what WHO needs to deliver on the plan will be launched shortly.

The plan, which builds on the temporary recommendations and standing recommendations issued by the WHO Director-General, focuses on implementing comprehensive surveillance, prevention, readiness and response strategies; advancing research and equitable access to medical countermeasures like diagnostic tests and vaccines; minimizing animal-to-human transmission;

and empowering communities to actively participate in outbreak prevention and control.

Strategic vaccination efforts will focus on individuals at the highest risk, including close contacts of recent cases and healthcare workers, to interrupt transmission chains.

At the global-level, the emphasis is on strategic leadership, timely evidence-based guidance, and access to medical countermeasures for the most at-risk groups in affected countries.

WHO is working with a broad range of international, regional, national and local partners and networks to enhance coordination across key areas of preparedness, readiness and response. This includes engagement with the ACT-Accelerator Principals group; the Standing Committee on Health Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response; the R&D Blueprint for Epidemics; and the interim Medical Counter Measures Network (i-MCM Net).

The WHO R&D Blueprint, along with Africa CDC, Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI) and National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, will host a virtual scientific conference on 29-30 August 2024 to align mpox research with outbreak control goals.

"The mpox outbreaks in the Democratic Republic of the

Congo and neighbouring countries can be controlled, and can be stopped," said Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director-General. "Doing so requires a comprehensive and coordinated plan of action between international agencies and national and local partners, civil society, researchers and manufacturers, and our Member States. This SPRP provides that plan, based on the principles of equity, global solidarity, community empowerment, human rights, and coordination across sectors."

WHO headquarters and regional offices have established incident management support teams to lead preparedness, readiness and response activities, and are significantly scaling up staff in affected countries.

Within the Africa Region, where need is greatest, the WHO Regional Office for Africa (AFRO) in collaboration with Africa CDC, will jointly spearhead the coordination of mpox response efforts. WHO AFRO and Africa CDC have agreed on a one-plan, one-budget approach as part of the Africa Continental Mpox Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan, currently under preparation.

At the national and sub-national level, health authorities will adapt strategies in response to current epidemiological trends.

*Source: WHO.*

## South Africa's Inflation Rate Drops to Lowest Level in Three Years

- South Africa's consumer inflation drops to 4.6% year-on-year in July, nearing the South African Reserve Bank's target range.
- Inflation hits its lowest level since July 2021, despite a slight increase on a month-on-month basis.
- The South African Reserve Bank maintains its main policy rate at 8.25% for over a year amidst economic price pressures.

South Africa's headline consumer inflation dropped to 4.6% year-on-year in July, down from 5.1% in June, according to data released by the statistics agency on Wednesday.

This brings inflation to its lowest level since July 2021 and closer to the South African Reserve Bank's (SARB) target, which aims for a midpoint of 4.5% within a 3% to 6% range.

The SARB has maintained its main policy rate at 8.25% since May last year, following a series of hikes totaling 475 basis points from late 2021. On a month-on-month basis, inflation rose slightly to 0.4% in July, compared to 0.1% in June, reflecting continued economic price pressures.

### Key Takeaways

The recent slowdown in inflation may prompt South African policymakers to consider lowering borrowing costs at their upcoming meeting on September 19. During its last meeting, the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) kept the benchmark interest rate at 8.25%. Still, the decision was closely contested, with four members voting to maintain the rate and two advocating for a 25 basis-point reduction. A stronger rand, bolstered by South Africa's new business-friendly coalition government, could further reduce inflation risks and strengthen the case for easing domestic monetary policy. Additionally, the outlook for the rand may improve if the Federal Reserve in the US decides to cut interest rates, which could provide further support for a rate cut in South Africa.

*Source: Daba Finance.*

# Planet Earth

## Sustainable management of natural resource to prevent natural disasters

BY FIKADU BELAY

The devastating impact of climate change is becoming increasingly evident, with landslides emerging as a significant and growing threat. Unlike other natural disasters, landslides can occur virtually anywhere on Earth, making them a global concern. The recent surge in landslides, particularly following winter seasons, has resulted in tragic loss of life and widespread devastation across numerous regions.

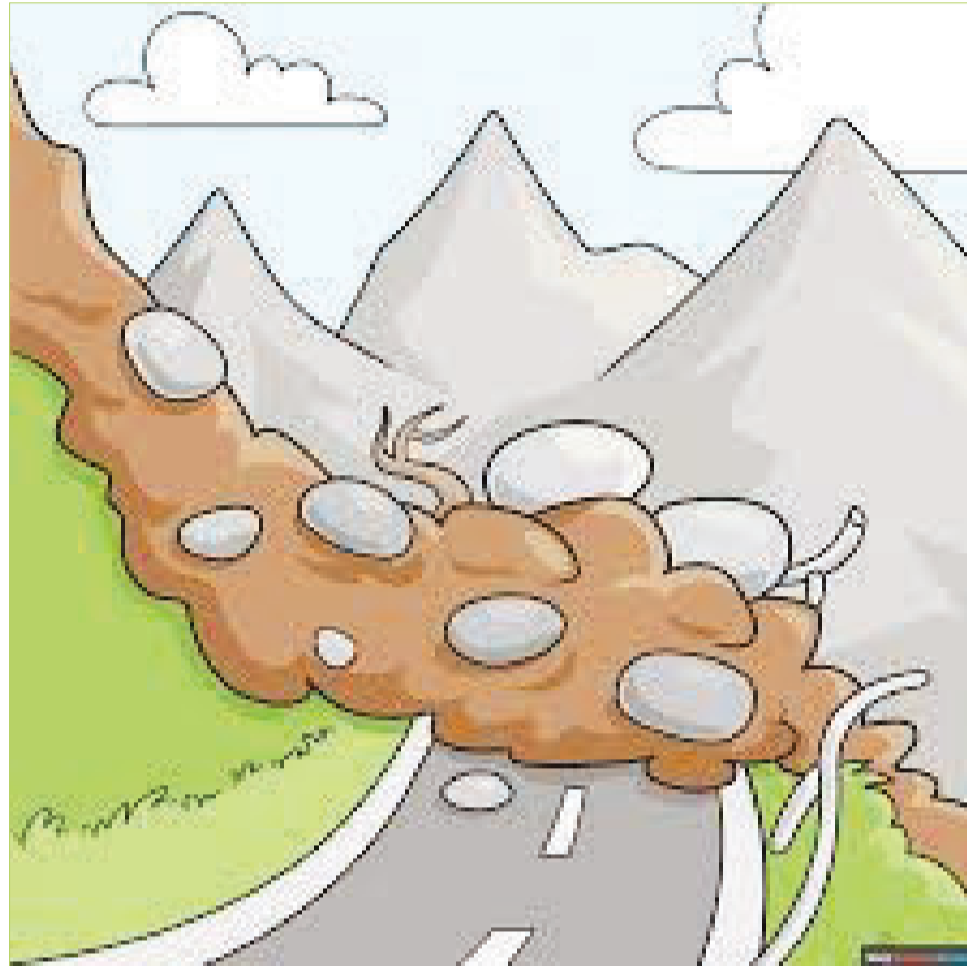
Recently, landslides occurred in Ethiopia. The consequences of landslides have been particularly severe. Regions like Gofa Zone in South Ethiopia, Benchi Sheko in Southwest Ethiopia, Kafa and Dauro Zones, Central Sidama Zone in Sidama Region, the city of Dire Dawa, Tigray region, Amhara region (South Wolo and North Gondar zones), Jimma in Oromia region, Kelem Welega, Hararge Zone have all experienced devastating landslides. These actions have claimed countless lives, leaving countless families shattered and struggling to handle the immense loss.

According to some experts, the human cost of these landslides in Gofa is immeasurable. Beyond the immediate loss of life, countless survivors, including children, the elderly, and the vulnerable, have been left without family support, facing an uncertain future. The scale of displacement and property destruction is staggering, with the accurate number of affected individuals difficult to determine.

While the immediate response to these disasters has included the provision of humanitarian aid, food, medical supplies, and construction materials, the long-term implications of these landslides are far-reaching. The loss of homes, livelihoods, and infrastructure has a profound impact on communities, exacerbating existing vulnerabilities and hindering their ability to rebuild, according to National Risk and Disaster Management Commission data.

Scholar of Soil Science, Professor Mohammad Hassen, highlighted the urgent need to prevent recently occurring new disasters and focus on redevelopment efforts in affected areas. He emphasized the vulnerability of Ethiopia's mountainous terrain to man-made disasters and underscored the importance of sustainable natural resource protection measures to mitigate these risks.

This landslide, causing widespread flooding and significant damage, serves as a stark reminder of the escalating impact of human activities on natural wealth. He stressed the need to understand the extent of the problem, identify appropriate solutions, and implement effective control measures. He points out that



many of the current challenges are rooted in past land management practices dating back decades.

Diriba Dadi (PhD), an environmental protection expert from Addis Ababa University, recognized the increasing frequency of landslides due to improper waste management, global climate change, and the lack of comprehensive planning for high-population settlements and development areas.

He emphasized the need for modern land use practices, including green economy initiatives, terracing, and land maintenance. He also stated that inadequate waste management exacerbates local climate change and hinders economic development.

Professor Mohammed advocated for a comprehensive approach that prioritizes prevention, public settlements that harmonize with nature, sector-specific land allocation, modern land use systems, diverse land treatment methods, and widespread reforestation with natural trees. These measures aim to restore the balance of nature, strengthen soil holding capacity, and promote rainwater infiltration.

Both experts' insights underscored the vital need for a proactive and holistic approach to land management in Ethiopia. By addressing the root causes of land disasters, promoting sustainable practices, and investing in preventative measures, the country can mitigate risks, protect its natural resources, and foster sustainable development.

In the past five years, the Ethiopian government has attempted to mitigate the impact of climate change and implement green economy strategies. For instance, in the Green Legacy Program, all the people in the country participate in this initiative that demonstrates a promising approach to tackling climate change and mitigating its impacts.

Moreover, this initiative highlighted the significance of comprehensive strategies that incorporate agroforestry, the development of the forest sector, urban greening and renewal, and integrated water and soil resource management, showcases Ethiopia's long-standing commitment to a multifaceted response to the effects of environmental degradation, promotes sustainable practices, and builds resilience within communities.

Ethiopia, after beginning and implementing the green legacy initiative, not only protects against the impact of climate change but also increases its contribution to carbon trade.

According to Ethiopia's Forest Development Data, the country's forests alone have the capacity to store an incredible 2.8 billion tons of carbon. Through its efforts to save forests, it has been able to cut 30% of the 35 billion tons of carbon that pollute the planet.

The nation's Green Legacy effort, a program that significantly contributes to environmental recovery and air pollution control, is primarily responsible for this accomplishment. It intends to plant an ambitious 50 billion tree saplings over

the next eight years as part of the Green Legacy program. In the last three years, plans have been in place to plant an additional 18 billion saplings, for a total of over 32.5 billion saplings planted under the project in the last five years.

The importance of a multi-sectoral approach is emphasized by soil science experts. Mohammed highlighted the need for policymakers and experts to work together to prevent further environmental degradation, redevelop disaster-affected areas, and implement sustainable practices. This collaborative effort should involve all stakeholders, from local communities to government agencies, ensuring that responsibility is shared and action is taken at all levels.

According to the Ethiopian Meteorology Institute's data, the warnings about potential flash floods, landslides, and overflowing rivers during the upcoming winter season highlight the urgent need for proactive measures. Communities and relevant authorities must take necessary precautions and prepare for potential disasters. This includes implementing early warning systems, strengthening infrastructure, and educating communities on disaster preparedness.

The experts emphasize the significance of a whole-hearted approach to addressing the challenges posed by climate change in Ethiopia. This includes protecting and restoring the country's ecosystem, which is vital for mitigating the impacts of climate change and ensuring long-term sustainability. Additionally, resettlement programs for vulnerable communities should be implemented to ensure their safety and well-being.

By learning from the successes and challenges of other countries and by adopting a multi-pronged approach that encompasses environmental protection, disaster preparedness, community engagement, and policy collaboration, Ethiopia can continue to build resilience and create a more sustainable future for its people.

Sustainable management of natural resources is mandatory to address the root causes of disasters like landslides, which are inextricably linked to climate change and human activities. The concerned bodies are responsible for sustainable land management practices, responsible infrastructure development, and robust early warning systems, which are crucial to mitigating the risks associated with disasters.

Furthermore, international cooperation and support are vital to providing the necessary resources and expertise to help affected communities recover and build resilience in the face of these increasingly frequent and severe disasters.