



Assistant Professor Befekadu Bogale

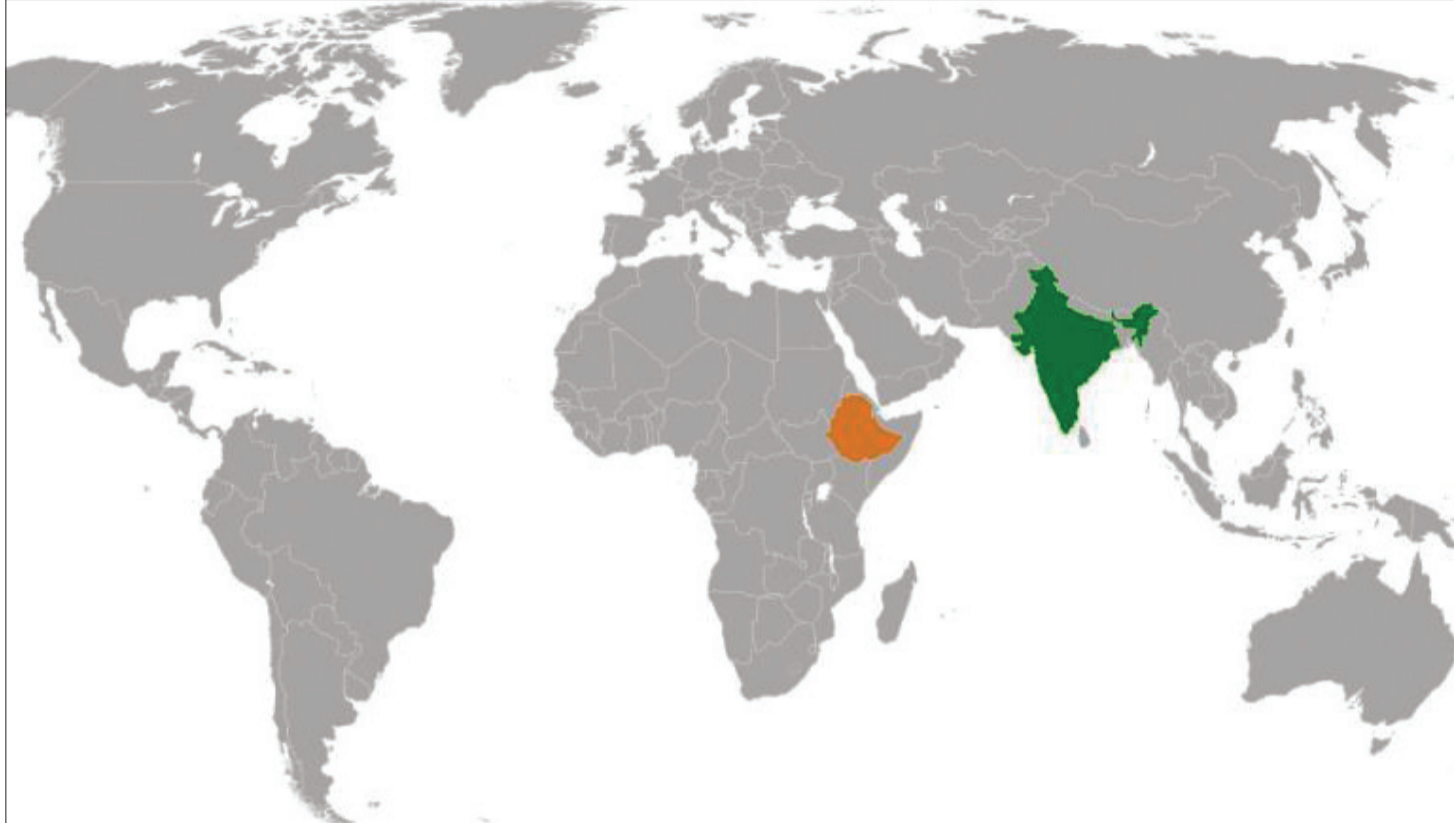
Researcher paying heed to Egypt's interference in HoA

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

ADDIS ABABA- Egypt's preparation to conduct military operation in Somalia would force Ethiopia to attentively follow diplomatic, political, security and military dynamics in the region, Horn Of Africa (HoA) Researcher said.

In exclusive interview with the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA), Ethiopian Foreign Affairs Institute, HoA Researcher, Assistant Professor Befekadu Bogale said

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Ethio- India trade: From imbalance to balance

BY YESUF ENDRIS

The trade relationship between Ethiopia and India has seen significant growth, but the trade imbalance heavily favors India, sparking criticism. Despite this, Ethiopia remains optimistic about future prospects,

particularly with India and Global South nations following its BRICS membership.

In 2022, trade between the two countries reached 2.8 billion USD, with Ethiopia's exports to India amounting to just 80 million USD, highlighting the stark imbalance. A new study by the Ministry of Agriculture

and the Indian Embassy in Ethiopia emphasizes the need for strategic efforts to address this gap.

The study, launched this week, identifies several barriers such as inefficiencies and long export times, which have hampered the

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Kassahun Gofe (PhD)

MoTRI launches 'Buy Ethiopian' campaign

BY ASHENAFIANIMUT

ADDIS ABABA – The Ministry of Trade and Regional Integration (MoTRI) has announced a national initiative aimed at promoting local products and enhancing market value-chains during the upcoming National Trade Week, themed 'Buy Ethiopian.' The event is scheduled to run from August 25 for five consecutive days.

In a press briefing yesterday, MoTRI Minister Kassahun Gofe (PhD) highlighted that while Ethiopia has been a key player in exporting products, there has no platform to showcase the full range commodities to

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Harari revamps tourist sites with major renovations

• Boosts visitor number by 100 %

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

ADDIS ABABA-Harari State is making significant strides to enhance the appeal and convenience of its tourist sites for both visitors and local communities.

The Head of the Harari Heritage Conservation and Tourism Bureau, Teweleda Abdosh, shared with the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that various initiatives are underway to improve the state's tourism infrastructure.

One of the key efforts to include the renovation of the Jagol walls, a UNESCO-inscribed heritage site. The state has successfully mit

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Ethiopia's macroeconomic policy reforms in stabilizing financial market, luring FDI

Buhe, a holiday transition from gloomiest to bright season

Green Legacy Initiative: A national commitment to global cause

News



Solomon Soka

Gov't to create 4.9 mln jobs

BY MESERET BEHAILU

ADDIS ABABA – Ethiopia is undertaking the necessary activities to create 4.9 million domestic and overseas jobs to citizens this fiscal year, Ministry of Labor and Skills (MoLS) disclosed.

MoLS has organized a half-day discussion forum yesterday in collaboration with UNDP and Ethiopian Outsourcing Association (EOA) under the theme “Creating jobs for the future: Uncovering the key drivers for the growth of Ethiopia’s outsourcing industry.”

On the occasion, MoLS State Minister Solomon Soka said his organization has been carrying out various activities to facilitate 4.9 million citizens with domestic and overseas jobs opportunities.

Last year, ministry had enabled 3.7 million citizens to get jobs including 345,000 overseas employment, he recalled.

He further stated that the number of unemployment is huge though outsourcing is playing an indispensable in creating jobs thereby securing revenues from different countries.

The State Minister mentioned that the U.S. has secured over 500 million USD from 14.3 millions of jobs created via outsourced activities undertaken in 2021.

In Ethiopia, he said, over 2,000,000 citizens are joining the job market each year.

MoLS is striving to secure over 14 million jobs till to 2025, however, he indicated that this plan was launched before the nation began implementing quality education system.

Moreover, the country needs to facilitate 4 million jobs to citizens due to the increasing rate of unemployment, he added.

“To overcome such problems, the country should expand and enlarge digital system, provide skilled human power, stakeholders’ integration, work with development partners, and the likes,” he noted.

Ethiopian Outsourcing Association’s President, Wondwosen Zewdie on his part said that Ethiopia has untapped resources to create jobs but it needs a wise approach to translate this into reality.

He added that outsourcing expands job opportunities, reduces foreign currency crunch and improves livelihoods and so on.

To this end, effectively implementing Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) is crucial to achieve the required result. Therefore, experience sharing from successful countries like India and Philippines would help to meet the goal.

Israeli medical delegation providing eye care to Ethiopians

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

ADDIS ABABA – As the diplomatic cooperation between Ethiopia and Israel is thriving through time, the latter’s high level medical delegation is in Addis Ababa conducting eye treatment to hundreds of Ethiopians.

Founder and Director of Operation Ethiopia, Prof. Morris Hartstein (MD) told the media yesterday that an Israeli medical delegation has been conducting examination and surgery for Ethiopian citizens who require serious eye treatment in Saint Paul’s and other hospitals.

“On this trip, we examined and treated hundreds of people including the Jewish community in Addis Ababa. In the last two days, we examined and treated over 500 people,” he said.

Professor Hartstein, who is also Director of Ophthalmic Plastic Surgery Shamir Medical Center, expressed that the delegation would revisit the country and serve citizens with an eye treatment.

“We like to resume coming here four times a year to deliver eye care in Ethiopia and to continue provide training for Ethiopian medical doctors regarding complicated eye surgery and other techniques,” he noted.

The delegation will head to Tigray to conduct cataract treatment to restore eyesight to 450 people blinded by dense untreated cataract, according to him.



“Our plan is, we want to expand to reach more people. We can deliver eye care and we would like to bring more teams from Israel,” Hartstein said.

In the next month, operation Ethiopia will conduct trachoma and DRC campaign in Desie area the director stated.

“Last time, we examined and treated 2,000 people in Gondar areas and gave them eye medication and for some we bring eye glasses,” he said.

Charge D’Affaires of Israel Embassy to Ethiopia, Tomer Bar-Lavi on his part said that Operation Ethiopia is led by Professor Morris Hartstein and he comes in Ethiopia few times every year with high level eye surgery medical doctors delegation from

Israel to conduct much needed eye surgery for children and people of various ages in Ethiopia.

Bar-Lavi added that professor Hartstein activities here and Operation Ethiopia represent the very strong deep and bilateral relation between Ethiopia and Israel.

“Currently even if we are facing conflict and still our people is working hard to maintain and strengthen historical, strong bilateral bond between our two nations.”

As to Bar-Lavi, Operation Ethiopia and others Israelis are working hard in fields of medicine, development and agriculture. “It is important for people of Ethiopia to see that the strong people to people bond between our nations is continuing and sustain strong.”

Ethio-China bilateral cooperation on new height: Embassy

ADDIS ABABA - The bilateral cooperation between Ethiopia and China is on a new height, Chinese Embassy Minister Counselor, Shen Qinmin affirmed to the Ethiopian News Agency (ENA).

The bilateral ties between Ethiopia and China has been further cemented with the all-weather strategic partnership announced by the leaders of the two countries during the visit of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) to China on October 2023.

The Minister Counselor stated that the diplomatic cooperation is significantly growing in terms of political and economic diplomacy, trade, investment and people-to-people ties.

Their relation has elevated to a new height strategic partnership that further strengthened the comprehensive bond between the two nations, he added.

“Last year, the two leaders, President Xi Jinping and Prime Minister Abiy, elevated the bilateral relationship to a new height which is now called all weather strategic partnership. So, our two countries relation is on the new height. I think that is a historical trend as well. We two countries of having ancient civilizations have a lot of bonds in terms of political trust, bilateral trade, investment as well as people to people exchanges,” Shen



explained.

Moreover, China is working closely with Ethiopia in agriculture, digital economy, manufacturing, industry, among other sectors, Shen underscored.

He pointed out that the number of Chinese investors engaged in Ethiopia is increasing every year, and this is an indication of the strong partnership between the two nations.

The ongoing bilateral ties is also a sign of strengthened China-Africa cooperation, Shen noted.

“You know every year, more and more Chinese investors are coming in to Ethiopia; and more programs and projects have been set up in Ethiopia that is an embodiment of the spirit of China-Africa cooperation.”

Furthermore, Shen described the

implementation of comprehensive economic reform policy in Ethiopia as encouraging news for both domestic and foreign investors in the country, affirming China’s support to the reform with full confidence.

He reiterated that the economic reform would bring opportunities that are beneficial not only for FDI but basically for Ethiopian themselves.

“I think this [comprehensive economic reform] is very encouraging news. We believe on this solid reform more opportunities will come. This will be beneficial; not only for foreign investors, but basically number one beneficiary of the reform is the Ethiopian themselves. Because, they are going to have a freer market economy just like China and all other countries,” Shen said.

The upcoming China-Africa Summit to be held in China in the coming month of September will create an additional opportunity to further strengthen Ethio-China bilateral relations to a higher levels, Shen said, emphasizing that China and Ethiopia will continue to cement their friendship that will not be changed under any circumstances.

It was learned that Ethiopia and China enjoy longstanding and historic relations; ever since they established formal diplomatic relations in 1970.

News

India proposes Global Dev't Compact to global south

BY STAFF REPORTER

ADDIS ABABA – India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi has proposed a comprehensive Global Development Compact to global south countries to avoid debt burdens and enhance balanced and sustainable development.

The premier has made clear this in the Inaugural Leaders' Session of the 3rd Voice of Global South Summit.

On the event, Modi announced a comprehensive Global Development Compact, rooted in India's developmental journey and partnership experiences. This compact aims to be human-centric, multi-dimensional, and sectoral, avoiding debt burdens and focusing on balanced and sustainable development.

According to the information obtained from the Ministry of External Affairs of India, Modi outlined key components of the compact, including trade promotion, capacity building, technology sharing,



and concessional finance, with a special 2.5 million USD fund for trade and a 1 million USD fund for capacity building.

He also highlighted India's commitment to providing affordable medicines and sharing

agricultural technology. Addressing concerns about global governance, he called for inclusive institutions prioritizing the Global South and reducing the gap between the Global North and South.

The prime minister also called for unity among Global South partners to meet the aspirations of the two-third of humanity. He stressed on the need for Just and Inclusive Global Governance, one that reflects the priorities of Global South.

According to Modi, the discussions held among the Global South partners would be duly reflected in the UN Summit of the Future.

The leaders participated in the summit, including Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD), have exchanged perspectives on the priorities and concerns of the Global South.

In his closing remarks, Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed heartfelt gratitude for the valuable insights and suggestions shared by the participants. He acknowledged the collective concerns and aspirations highlighted by the leaders, affirming that the Global South stands united.

Modi concluded by commending the participants for their contributions and reaffirmed the commitment to advancing the Global South's progress through continued collaboration.

MoTRI launches...

importers, exporters, and potential business communities. The event aims to bridge this gap by promoting quality local products that meet global standards, thereby supporting import substitution and boosting the export of domestic products to the international market.

The minister also emphasized that the event will significantly impact import-export trade facilitation, enhancing competitiveness both locally and internationally. A key display will be the inauguration of the country's first state-of-the-art import-export exhibition center, spanning 730 square meters, which is expected to accelerate business competitiveness and showcase Ethiopia's export potential.

The exhibition will be officially opened in the presence of ministries, stakeholders, business communities, and residents of the metropolis. In collaboration with the Institute of Ethiopian

Standards, the MoTRI has also prepared new standards to streamline the ongoing Sunday market, ensuring the availability of basic consumer goods at reasonable prices.

Additionally, panel discussions will be held, focusing on challenges, outcomes and future prospects of the local market-value chain, with participation from government representatives, scholars, and business leaders. Key topics will include import-export and regional integration, as well as national quality infrastructure.

On the final day, a public-private dialogue will take place, aimed at fostering long-term collaboration. Recognition awards will also be presented to influential personalities across various sectors, including top importers, exporters, quality product manufacturers, and those who have played a key role in consumer goods supply and inflation mitigation.

Ethio- India trade...

countries trade ties. Ethiopian Agriculture Minister Girma Amante (PhD) and Indian Ambassador Anil Kumar Rai acknowledged the imbalance and stressed the importance of leveraging Ethiopia's agricultural potential—especially in oilseeds, pulses, cotton, and coffee to address the trade deficit.

In the 2023-24 fiscal year, India imported 192.13 million USD worth of coffee, more than double Ethiopia's total exports during the same period. The study suggests that restrictive export policies are preventing Ethiopia from capitalizing on its potential.

In response to these challenges, Ethiopia has implemented macroeconomic reforms, including liberalizing commodity exports and foreign exchange policies to create a more favourable business environment. These reforms aim to boost productivity, enhance value chains, and expand market access, particularly for products in high demand in India.

Sunil Verma, the principal investigator of the research, expressed optimism that these reforms, particularly the recent liberalization of the foreign exchange policy, would positively

impact Ethiopia's export sector. He emphasized that Ethiopia has significant potential to produce and export a variety of products, including pulses oilseeds, sugar cotton and gemstones, which could help balance its trade relationship with India.

Indian Ambassador Anil Kumar Rai praised the shared commitment to strengthening economic ties and mutual cooperation between the two nations. He highlighted the natural synergy between India's growing demand for high-quality agricultural products and Ethiopia's rich agricultural sector, which presents a significant opportunity for both countries.

The study recommends several measures to address the trade imbalance, including reducing logistic and trade costs, improving infrastructure, removing exchange controls, diversifying exports, further liberalizing foreign direct investment (FDI), and developing light manufacturing. If implemented, these steps could help Ethiopia achieve a more balanced trade relationship with India.

India is also among the top investing countries in Ethiopia.

Researcher paying heed to Egypt's...

that Egypt's recent activity to replace Ethiopia's role in Somalia requires close attention.

Ethiopians have sacrificed their lives to maintain peace and stability in Somalia and now Egypt is preparing to take this role. For Befekadu, the issue is not as such a direct threat, but requires special attention.

According to him, Egypt's tendency to enter Somalia for security operations would force Ethiopia to focus on diplomatic, political, security and military moves in the region.

He believed that the interest of Egypt is not maintaining Somalia's peace and stability, but manipulating country's leadership.

Basically, the deployment of Egyptian troops as peacekeepers is not a direct threat to Ethiopia, but it needs special attention and alertness. He suggested that Ethiopia has to focus on enhancing its development while pursuing meticulous approach

towards its security in the volatile region.

According to the researcher, Ethiopia and Somalia relatively share the same history and boundary. As a result, Egyptian troops cannot solely carry out the responsibility of Ethiopian troops to ensure country's stability.

"I don't think Egyptian troops would take a responsibility or commitment to stabilize country's peace and stability because they didn't share anything with Somalia. Thus, some Somalis are opposing the move," Befekadu said.

Befekadu expressed that Ethiopia has a full right to undertake measures to maintain its territorial sovereignty centering its national interest, and as a major role player in the region to crush Al-Shabaab terrorists. Whatsoever, Egypt's intervention in Somalia requires close attention, he stressed.

Harari revamps tourist sites...

igated risks to the Jagol walls by mobilizing over 88 million Birr in funding from Diaspora communities, sectoral offices, investors and the public. This renovation preserved the historical integrity of the walls while enhancing their aesthetic appeal for tourists and locals alike.

The Jagol walls, which feature around 360 roads, have seen the reconstruction of approximately 80 main roads, with previously closed roads now reopened. These efforts have also created job opportunities for youth in areas such as creative arts, painting, and handicrafts within the Jagol walls.

In addition to the Jagol walls, other tangible heritage site, including those inscribed under UNESCO, have undergone renovation. Teweleda

highlighted the significance of enlisting Shewal Eid under UNESCO, noting its importance in promoting the state's unique cultural celebrations and boosting tourism.

The state is also focusing on branding unique Harari products and recently inaugurated the first phase of an Eco-park. This park, part of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's Medemer Book initiative, features a cafeteria, restaurant, fruit and coffee center, medicinal plants, handicraft stores, and an art and exhibition gallery. The Eco-park and the renovation of the Hayna tourist site were funded by over 70 million Birr raised from the book sales.

As a result of these efforts, international tourist visits to Harari have increased by 100%, while domestic tourism has seen a 90% rise compared to previous years.

Opinion

AGOA reinstatement bounties

BY MENGESHA AMARE

Trade at national, regional, continental and even at global level presents new opportunities, livable access to all what is needed and requirements for a given nation to bring about comprehensive alteration amid challenges, of course.

As doing business is central to ending global poverty, countries that are open to international trade tend to grow faster, innovate, improve productivity and provide higher income and more opportunities to all citizens. Yes, open trade benefits lower income households by offering goods and services. Integrating with the world economy through trade and global value chains helps drive economic growth and reduce poverty, locally and even continentally and globally.

The increasing complexity of trade has serious implications for the world's poor, who often are disproportionately disconnected from global, regional and/or even local markets. As clearly witnessed here and there, poverty is often concentrated in geographic areas that are poorly connected to active economic centers. Firms and communities in these areas miss opportunities to develop skilled, competitive workforces; they are not integrated in global production chains and are less able to diversify their products and skills.

In due course of boosting the Ethiopian economy, the trade and business trajectories is supportive of an open, rules-based, predictable multilateral trading system, with the goal of helping countries participate in and enjoy the benefits of such a regional, continental and global system.

It is also obvious that trade facilitation, logistics, and border management would help Ethiopia integrate into continental and global value chains through targeted reforms and investments. To further enhance global trade, the World Bank works with governments to address trade obstacles by designing and implementing policies that maximize competitiveness, increase connectivity, and facilitate trade. In line with twin goals of eradicating extreme poverty and increasing shared prosperity, the World Bank Group (WBG) helps its client countries improve their access to developed country markets and enhance their participation in the world economy.

The issue of trade competitiveness and diversification, trade facilitation and transport logistics, support for market access and international trade cooperation as well as managing shocks and promoting greater inclusion such as trade and poverty; trade-gender linkages has to be well underscored in making countries, especially developing ones like ours, needs to be well taken care of.

The World Bank Group works with a wide range of stakeholders, including donor and client countries, the private sector, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), multilateral institutions and regional economic communities among others. Among the partners are trade champions that are

leaders in promoting an open, rules-based international trading system.

The private sector is increasingly interested in ensuring that free trade is protected and helps support business opportunities including entry and growth for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and related entities as well as participation in global value chains.

Countries like ours are increasingly turning to the World Bank Group for advice on trade and, more widely, on investment climate reform to ensure competitiveness. The WBG has an opportunity to contribute by sharing the technical evidence that helps developing countries such as Ethiopia make sound policy decisions on trade and investment climate-related issues that will be critical for future growth and poverty reduction. In February 2017, the World Trade Organization's Trade Facilitation Agreement entered into force, spearheading a global effort to reduce trade costs and help countries better connect to the global economy. This milestone presents an opportunity for the World Bank Group to further assist countries to design practical reform strategies and their implementation to pursue poverty reduction and shared prosperity.

If Ethiopia cannot regain its benefits, the costs to do business there will eventually become too great for many, and the act offers duty-free access to US markets for countries in sub-Saharan Africa that meet certain conditions on rule of law, human rights, and labor protections. While not transformational, the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) has provided substantial diplomatic benefits and led to major growth in sectors such as apparel with exports to the United States nearly doubling over 20 years. Congress should renew Ethiopia's AGOA institution as the renewal offers an opportunity to the country to share bounties of the act thereby being much more beneficiary.

Since Ethiopian companies want certainty that their products will be competitive in US markets, so these companies or industries require congress to act urgently. The United States needs to pursue a partnership with Ethiopia that builds on emerging international standards and reduces barriers in the latter in particular and in African countries in general to digital trade, including cross-border data flows and internet access.

It is obvious that agencies, led by the US Agency for International Development (USAID) and others have supported the AGOA by investing in infrastructure, including roads, ports, and electricity, as well as by directly assisting exporters in priority sectors. For a number of reasons, complementary measures to the AGOA, including capacity building and opportunities to demonstrate new products and services, will need to continue but should be addressed in appropriations legislation, rather than holding up AGOA renewal. Ethiopia has to have the benefits of the AGOA via reinstatement, indeed!

Yes, it is high time for Ethiopia to be

reinstated to AGOA as it benefits and helps increase investment and it is hoped that the next step brings expected reinstatement of the country. True, AGOA provides access to eligible sub-Saharan African countries with duty-free access to the US market for a number of products, including clothing, footwear and a range of agricultural goods.

It is also well remembered that the US banned Ethiopia's access to duty-free two or more years blaming the country for 'gross violations of human rights being perpetrated by Ethiopians and other parties' amid the widening conflict in the north of the country. Though some accusations are exaggerated, genuine corrections have been taken and the country has to be given the opportunity again.

Since the export products from Ethiopia have reached USA free of tax, American companies and consumers become beneficiaries. That is why it is said that AGOA instatement helps both Ethiopia and USA garner benefit, and it pronounces a win-win tendency.

The US suspended some African countries like Mali and Guinea as well from the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), and the US maintains a strong trade and investment relationship with sub-Saharan Africa. In recent years, many African nations have enjoyed high rates of economic growth, rising living standards and a reduction in poverty. As a result, U.S. trade ties with sub-Saharan Africa have evolved and expanded.

Unequivocally, major American companies have entered the market making first-time large-scale investments. Numerous existing investors have increased their operations. Besides, AGOA has helped create a more conducive environment for American investment and business interests as African markets continue to expand.

The legislation has also enabled many American companies to get a foothold into key African markets and diversify their global sourcing chains. As many countries like Ethiopia have taken advantage of the benefits related to AGOA's tariff preferences and liberal rules of origin for apparel, their embargo has to be reviewed well.

Yes, since AGOA's inception, a number of countries on the continent of Africa have taken advantage of the program to increase and diversify their exports to the United States. Currently, 16 AGOA-eligible countries have national AGOA utilization strategies.

A comprehensive review is conducted of each country that has requested designation as an AGOA beneficiary, and during each annual review a number of concerns surface for every country. Addressing these concerns is an important aspect of targeted U.S. policy objectives to be pursued with specific governments.

The Ethiopian government would like to focus on diversifying the economy through agriculture, livestock, renewable energy, and minerals, although efforts to improve domestic economic and social conditions

have been hampered by the continued threat of lack of peace and security, but is working hard to correct a number of weaknesses.

Of course, Ethiopia's re-eligibility for AGOA is dependent on the Ethiopian government's actions as they are the determinant factors. The Biden administration moved to suspend Ethiopia from the preferential trade regime in late 2021 in light of allegations of human rights violations committed during the two-year northern war. As a result, exporters have been unable to benefit from the tariff-free trade opportunities they had enjoyed under AGOA since its establishment in 2000. This move in turn, made many employees (most of them are women) lose their job.

It is remembered that Washington DC hosted senior officials from the US government and 38 AGOA-eligible sub-Saharan African countries to discuss economic cooperation and trade facilities. At a more recent digital press briefing, US Deputy Assistant Secretary for African Affairs Joy Basu and Assistant Trade Representative for Africa Constance Hamilton responded to queries from the local media about Ethiopia's potential reinstatement to the trade program by saying that the decision rests in the hands of Ethiopian officials.

Basu noted the US government has taken part in extensive discussions with Ethiopian authorities on the necessary steps for regaining AGOA benefits, particularly in supporting civil society and addressing civil unrest in regions outside Addis Ababa. He said "We've had an ongoing dialogue with the Ethiopian government. We are reviewing any actions taken and hope Ethiopia will be eligible again once the government addresses democracy, human rights, and governance issues."

The US government conducts an annual review of each beneficiary country to assess compliance with AGOA's clear legislative requirements. It has so far been very specific with the Ethiopian government about the required actions and remarkable step arte to be taken in this regard.

US needs to acknowledge the better market alternatives available to Ethiopian manufacturers as Ethiopia's reinstatement to AGOA helps boost areas of cooperation between the US and Ethiopia. Hence, Washington needs to reverse its decision and allow Ethiopia to rejoin AGOA.

As Ethiopia awaits the outcome of the review, the government's commitment to addressing the specified issues will be crucial in determining its AGOA eligibility and future trade relations with the United States. The sound decision would especially be important to Ethiopia's textile manufacturing industry and other complementary trade amenities.

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

Editorial

Opinion

Creating a better future

Ethiopia is implementing a range of activities and endeavoring to rehabilitate its degraded lands, build a green, climate resilient economy and contribute its share to global efforts applied to tackle the unprecedented impacts of climate change.

Among others, under its 'Green Legacy Initiative' launched in 2019, the country has been carrying out annual massive tree planting activities to re-greening depleted lands and addressing climate emergency. In turn, in the seedling planting campaigns carried out over the last five years, promising achievements are registered.

The nation, by mobilizing millions of Ethiopians from all walks of life, can plant billions of tree saplings of various species across the county. In actual fact, in each year, it can plant seedlings that surpassed the targets set for each of the preceding years.

For instance, in the first phase of the initiative, Ethiopia planted 25 billion tree seedlings. In the preceding rainy season (2023), the country planted over 566 million seedlings in 12 hours throughout the country, excelling the projected target of 500 million tree seedlings in a single day. As a result, it can increase its forest cover to 23.6 percent from 17.2 before the initiative years.

Correspondingly, in this rainy season, Ethiopia has finalized preparations to plant 600 million seedlings in a single day. The program is scheduled to take place at national level on the coming Friday, August 23, 2024.

Ethiopians, ranging from youngsters to adults and senior citizens are expected to actively participate and leave their marks in this campaign,

In a recent message he conveyed at his social page in line with the 2024 scheme of planting 600 million seedlings in 12 hours, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed also called on Ethiopians to energetically partake in the program. He urged Adults and children to plant over 20 and 10 seedlings respectively; thus practically demonstrate their love for their country and their respect to the generation.

Without a doubt, Ethiopians, as usual, will appear early in the morning and plant as many seedlings as possible. Unexaggeratedly, they will make a history- they achieve the set the target.

However, to produce tangible outcomes at global level, the commitment and readiness of all countries is highly decisive. Especially, those African countries, that are not capable enough to develop their own coping strategies; but experiencing the harshest consequences in their everyday activities, should follow Ethiopia's steps.

They need to mobilize their people and capitalize on seedling planting mechanisms to stave off climate change related catastrophes, stay resilient in the face of the change and create a better future for their people. By planting as many trees as possible, we can ward off the impacts and create a better future not only for the present but also for the coming ones.

The experience of Ethiopia's Green Legacy Initiative is ideal instances that can give a good lesson how it is possible to make a difference if we work cooperatively for common good. It can also demonstrate how combined hands can alter the fate of the planet. Thus, global countries should replicate Ethiopia's initiative and play constructive role to reverse the impacts of climate change. Equally important, those developed countries need to walk the talk and redouble their backing, including fulfilling their promises.

This year's 600 million seedlings planting campaign will take place in the coming Friday, August 23, 2024 all over the country. Thus, international community, foreign mission and Ethiopia's friends residing in the country need to participate and leave their footprints in Ethiopia's Green Legacy Initiative.

Steps towards effective macro economic reform

BY SOLOMON DIBABA

level.

The recently introduced market based foreign exchange structure as a major component of the financial subsector of the macroeconomic reform policy stipulates that foreign exchange rates will be determined by supply and demand structure.

A number of social and mainstream media outlets have been airing erroneous information that the government is engaged in devaluation of the bank notes. To the contrary, the state introduced a floating exchange rate, where the value of a currency is determined by market forces without direct government or central bank intervention, can be categorized into several types based on the level and nature of interventions by monetary authorities.

There are at least four types of floating exchange rates which include free floating exchange rate which is now introduced by the Ethiopian Government in which the currency value is determined purely by the market forces of supply and demand, managed floating exchange rate in which the currency value is determined by market forces but the central bank occasionally intervenes to stabilize or influence the currency value, crawling peg is another type of managed float where the currency is allowed to fluctuate within a specified range, target zone or band which is a hybrid system in which the currency is allowed to float but the central bank intervenes to keep the currency in a specified band.

Given the above mentioned analysis, what are the major preconditions that should be fulfilled to ensure the effective implementation of the macroeconomic policy and its components? In the first place, the government is expected to introduce stringent financial, monetary, fiscal and expenditure management of public fund. In addition, the implementations of the various policies need to be coordinated managed and integrated in a cost effective manner to maximize the outputs of the various sectors of the national economy.

Furthermore, it is important to ensure effective coordination between the activities of financial institutions including banks, capital market components, microfinance institutions and other financial institutions. As Prime Minister Abiy has repeatedly stressed, combating contraband and illicit trade transactions need to be a national priority.

Among other things, completing the digitalization of the commanding heights of the national economy will help to increase efficiency in the implementation of the macroeconomic policy. Nonetheless, modernizing the economic management of the private sector and building the capacity of their managers in line with the standards of international business development structure is crucial for the production and productivity of their manufacturing sectors.

Developing more economic zones and free trade areas across the country will help to develop inclusive economic transactions that will be based on modern logistics and transport systems. In addition the Ethiopian Capital Market which will be in operation in October 2024 will help not only to enhance financial flow but would also help to promote more investment and modern financial flow management at macroeconomic

Conducting continuous monitoring and evaluation of the performance of the various sectors of the economy and taking immediate corrective measures will be useful to minimize the margin of errors and mistakes in operational management and take necessary corrective measures.

It must be clear that the government did not decide to formulate and develop the policy due to pressures from international financial institutions as some try to conclude. The merits and demerits of the implementation of the policy was meticulously weighed and decisions were accordingly made.

As Prime Minister Abiy has recently noted, the implementation of the macroeconomic policy is not expected to be conducted on a red carpet and demands the unreserved efforts of the entire public, government and private intuitions as well as CSOs across the country.

By ensuring a stable macroeconomic environment, Ethiopia can attract more foreign direct investment (FDI). Investors are more likely to invest in countries with predictable economic policies, lower inflation rates, and stable exchange rates, which can lead to increased capital inflows and job creation

Macroeconomic policies focused on sustainable growth help Ethiopia achieve long-term economic development. By managing resources efficiently and promoting sectors like agriculture, manufacturing, and services, Ethiopia can ensure consistent economic growth that benefits the entire population.

Effective macroeconomic policies can lead to poverty reduction by promoting job creation, improving access to basic services, and increasing household incomes. By fostering economic growth and equitable distribution of resources, the government can improve living standards and reduce poverty levels.

Increased government revenue from economic growth allows for better funding of public services such as education, healthcare, and infrastructure. This, in turn, contributes to human capital development and overall social welfare.

Macroeconomic policies that focus on improving trade competitiveness can help Ethiopia boost its exports. By enhancing productivity, improving infrastructure, and adopting favorable trade policies, Ethiopia can increase its market share in global trade, leading to higher foreign exchange earnings.

Economic development driven by sound macroeconomic policies can reduce social and political instability. When people have better access to jobs, education, and healthcare, there is less social unrest, and the country can enjoy greater political stability.

A strong macroeconomic framework helps Ethiopia build resilience to external shocks such as global financial crises, commodity price fluctuations, and natural disasters.

Finally and more importantly, ensuring the prevalence of the rule of law and order is of critical importance for full implementation of the objectives of the National Macroeconomic Policy.

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

Ethiopia's macroeconomic policy reforms in stabilizing financial market, luring FDI

BY ADDISALEM MULAT

It is important to note that on the heels of the implementation of the macroeconomic policy reform, Ethiopia in the present circumstances has jumpstarted achieving the sought after objective at the earliest possible time. In the face of a wide spectrum of speculation and in the midst of every challenge, the new reform has set in motion yielding results and heading in the right direction more than ever before.

As the newly implemented macroeconomic policy reforms play a paramount role in providing a new impetus, it is envisioned that quandaries revolving around black market that have been left unanswered will find a solution just around the corner. As the accomplishment of the reform is fully hinging on the participation of all stakeholders, everyone without batting an eye should strive for the success of the implementation.

Unless everyone regardless of age, sexual category, religion, ethnicity and other related aspects stand in unison, getting the desired goal will be like squeezing blood out of stone.

With respect to the situation of foreign exchange, there is a large amount of foreign currency traded that can be legally issued and taxed, and this loss of revenue creates obstacles to support government and public services and infrastructure. Other than that black market can exacerbate the cost of living by creating artificial shortages and increasing inflation in the length and breadth of the country in the shortest possible time.

As the federal government of Ethiopia has been going to great lengths with the intention of achieving the desired target, the future will be rosy. Apart from propelling the country's economy to new heights, the macroeconomic policy will change the lives of the people of the Horn of Africa and beyond.

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

Noting that his company was eagerly waiting for the macroeconomic reform, the chairperson stated the reform is crucial for manufacturing sector. The reform policy is vital to manage the economy, increase export trade, attract investment, and boost foreign currency earnings, the investor elaborated.

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

He cited the lack of foreign currency as an obstacle for launching new projects for his company and he stated that the reform policy will be instrumental to bridge the previous gap. It will also boost export trade, increase farmers' revenue worth of their labor and achieve equitable economic benefits, he said.

It is possible to control illegal money transfers by following strict regulations and



monitoring money transfers. This is evident in various nations. In point of fact, following the implementation of the macroeconomic policy reform the exchange rate system have significantly reduced black market activity.

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) said, "The government has established key strategic directions to ensure the efficient and effective implementation of the macroeconomic reform program. The major policy measures outlined are aligned with our long-term and medium-term national development plans. Additionally, the government will develop robust monitoring and support frameworks to safeguard Ethiopia's national interests and maximize benefits for our citizens. All relevant ministries and governmental institutions will provide the necessary monitoring and support."

"In addition, necessary measures will be taken to protect vulnerable members of society from short term negative impacts of the reform. Social safety net programs will be strengthened. In addition, low-income government employees will receive necessary wage subsidies. The government will also partially subsidize fuel price increments," he pledged.

The macroeconomic reform process will be subject to continuous review and evaluation. The government will make timely, necessary, and predictable policy adjustments based on current information. Following the macroeconomic reform process, the government will implement active measures to address potential good governance concerns and criminal activities. Additional details regarding the reform will be regularly disclosed by the Ministry of Finance and the National Bank.

The transition of the foreign exchange management system to a market system in which the foreign exchange rate is determined between banks and their customers and people can trade dollars directly in banks with no difficulties. Up to the present moment, people purchase from black market in view of the fact that they do not have access to dollars in the bank.

In former times, banks were not able to collect more dollars on account of the currency law. But at the present time, banks are raising currency at a high level. When they have enough Dollars and jumpstart providing

foreign exchange services at full capacity, people will not buy from black market. Through the passage of time, the black market will deteriorate and vanish from the face of the country until hell freezes over.

A case in point, countries like Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania can be cited as an example. As macroeconomic reform policy has been implemented in these nations there is no such a thing as black market. Noting that the elimination of black market would help control inflation by removing artificial price triggered by irregular exchange rates. Needless to say a more stable currency may lead to lower prices for imported goods.

Ethiopia's macroeconomic reform policy will unlock and fundamentally transform the stagnating economy, Ethiopian Steel PLC CEO Bhavesh Chandaria said, according to information obtained from local media.

The chief executive officer with rich experience about Africa in the recent past stated that the years of restrictive economic control regime in Ethiopia did not pay rewards to Ethiopia. As the decades of the restrictive economy control regimes failed to improve the economy, the country has embarked on a macroeconomic reform policy that is under implementation.

Like many economists, Chandaria described the reform as a ground-breaking and transformational change that would stimulate to Ethiopia's stagnant economy by addressing deep-seated economic structural issues, including foreign exchange distortions and macroeconomic imbalances.

"This reform is ground-breaking. It has gotten attention and all my global friends and investors have been calling since last week to find out how it actually pans out. I found it is comprehensive, holistic and business incorporation. Corporates cannot ask for more," he said. Most importantly, the CEO noted that the reform would unlock and transform the economy from the sellers' market where buyers and customers were suffering.

According to him, consumers in the Ethiopian economy have suffered from high cost, long wait period, lack of choices to a fair, efficient market and buyers' market. The reform would eliminate the opportunity and power advantage unduly given to traders to certain intermediaries like banks and monopoly, he

added.

In addition, the macroeconomic reform will fundamentally stimulate the country's Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), Chandaria pointed out. The reform also lends an opportunity to enhance manufacturers' production capacities, which are suffering under capacity.

With the help of proper regulatory measures, one can effectively crack down on the black market. This transition will not only stabilize the economy but also increase the government's income as it is on the basis of the legality of the work. Besides, the macroeconomic reform implementation plays a huge role in restoring trust in financial institutions, laying the foundation for sustainable economic development by attracting foreign investment, and attracting everyone to financial technology.

No one denies the fact that elimination of the black market would help control inflation by removing artificial price pressures caused by irregular exchange rates. With the help of proper regulatory measures, Ethiopia can effectively crack down on the black market.

As it is possible to smooth the path of the implementation without any hitch, pertinent bodies should move heaven and earth to bring about the predetermined objective.

Minister of Government Communication Service (GCS), Legesse Tulu (PhD), announced that the government will continue to implement enhanced measures against entities engaged in illegal activities following the implementation of macroeconomic reforms, according to sources.

The Minister briefed the media recently on the progress of the macroeconomic reforms, summer activities, and other current national issues. In his briefing, Legesse stated that these newly introduced reforms are expected to sustain comprehensive economic growth in Ethiopia.

Ethiopia has embarked on a macroeconomic reform policy to address deep-seated economic structural issues, including foreign exchange distortions and macroeconomic imbalances, it was indicated. He highlighted that 2023 saw numerous successful endeavors, particularly in the summer irrigation agriculture, and Ethiopia's tourism sectors.

He further emphasized that the developmental initiatives in various corridors are a source of national pride and benefit to citizens. Legesse explained that the economy has demonstrated resilience by overcoming both external and internal shocks, achieving sustainable growth.

He asserted that the recently initiated comprehensive macroeconomic reform implementation will reinforce Ethiopia's growth, contributing to creating a stable macro-economy, improving trade and investment, enhancing sector efficiency and competitiveness, and strengthening the government's implementation capacity.

The reform plays a crucial role in ensuring inclusive growth, increasing the effectiveness of development projects, and improving government revenue, the Minister stressed.

He commended the majority of the business community for understanding the necessity of the reforms and continuing their usual business activities with a sense of national duty.

Art & Culture

Buhe, a holyday transition from gloomiest to bright season

BY NAOL GIRMA

Buhe is here

That bald *Buhe*

Smear it with butter

So it won't get greyer

This is a song, which children sing during the *Buhe* festival, every August 19th. *Buhe* is one of the holidays celebrated by the Ethiopian Orthodox believers in memorial of the transfiguration of Jesus Christ on Tabor Mountain. During the day, children and youths go around their neighbourhoods and sing songs that reflect the farewell of winter and the coming of a bright summer. The observation also includes a ceremony where residents tie up bundle of sticks together, *Chibo*, burn them at their neighbourhoods.

While children and the youths go door to door singing and chanting, they will be rewarded with the *mulmul* bread. There are common songs that memorize and tell the story of Jesus's transfiguration and the feelings of the three apostles who witnessed the phenomenon. When the children sing of a "bold *Buhe*" they are referring to the *mulmul* bread they are receiving after they sung on door step of a residence.

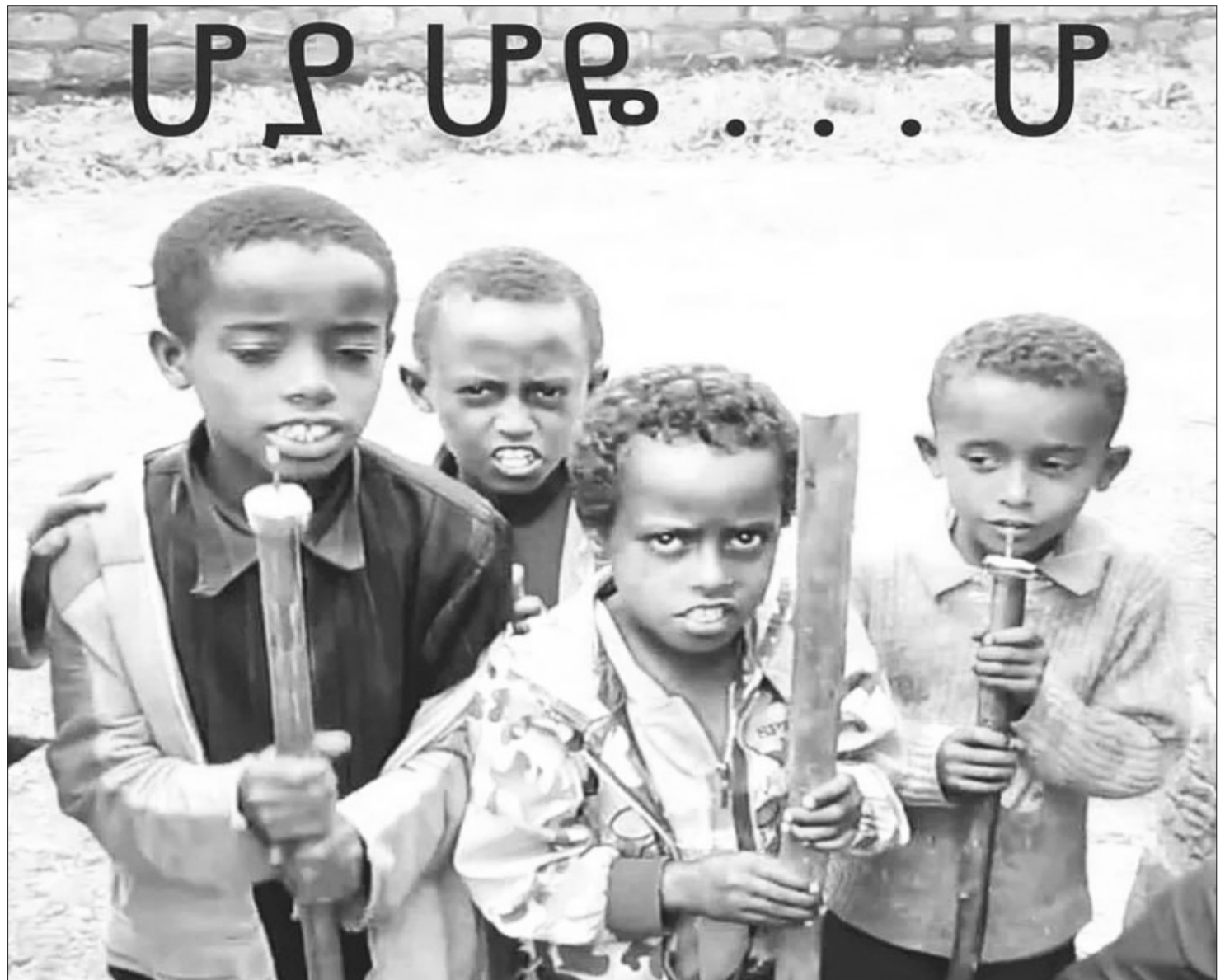
There is a historical attachment to the singing and the backing of the *mulmul* bread. During the day of Jesus's transfiguration, shepherds were amazed by the bright light they wouldn't go home. Parents who were worried about their children went to the place with breads and burning lights.

It is also a celebration that strengthens community togetherness and the values of staying close to one another.

The main song by the children and youths is called and usually starts by "*Hoya Hoya*". One boy leads the song and his partners will follow rhythmically. As they finish singing the house wife will bring them the *mulmul* bread, one for each of them. Then they bless the family of the house for next year and leave the residence. They would eat the bread and stay outside their houses cracking their *Jiraf*.

Sunday school students on the other hand, have their own traditional ways of commemorating the day. When the day approaches, the students walk around door to doors and collect different types of cereals and materials to produce traditional foods and drinks for the holiday. On that very day the students would bring all the food and drink and serve the people who stayed fasting at the church ceremony. They are also allowed to celebrate between themselves enjoying the food and the traditional bear they have prepared.

The celebration includes student's performance of *Kine* (*Pun*). *Kine* is one of the typical traditions of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, which can be considered as one of the most significant fields of studies in Sunday schools. It comprises of using a very deep and colloquial words to praise God or criticise certain act of a person or



administration.

Beside its spiritual image, *Buhe* is also a celebration that reflects the deep cultural heritages of Ethiopia with vibrant sounds and movements. For the fact that, the majority of the population lives by traditional farming, the rainy season has been the toughest time of the year, which farmers and their family spend with an intensified hard work. They struggle with the rain, the cold weather and the mud as they plough their farmland, sow the seeds, as they weed and keep their crops neat clean.

Therefore, August 19 will be they day, which they declare the end of the rainy season and the approach of the harvest season. Even though, there is no resting until the yield is harvested, that's the point where the hard work starts to ease. Together with the bright memorial of the Jesus's transfiguration, *Buhe* will be the day to celebrate hoping for the coming bright and fruitful new Ethiopian year.

As a result the major traditional musical instruments such as the *Kebero* (traditional Ethiopian Drum), the *Masinko*, one stringed fiddle and *Kirar*; (a lyre-like traditional Ethiopian musical instrument), would be used to make the festival more rhythmic and vibrant. Since *Buhe* is a festival that brings people in same neighbourhoods together, songs will be followed by traditional dances. The dancers take the centre of a circle which is made near the bonfire that was lit as night falls.

Ethiopian *Buhe* is more than just a festival; it's a vibrant tapestry woven into the fabric of Ethiopian culture, rich with history and

sharing, and respect for tradition that are deeply ingrained in Ethiopian society.

At the heart of *Buhe* is the tradition of singing and chanting, which is not just entertainment but a way to express communal identity. Young boys, often dressed in traditional attire, roam the streets with handmade wooden sticks, singing songs that reflect their hopes, dreams, and the challenges they face. These songs are not only a form of artistic expression but also serve as a means of storytelling, passing down history and cultural values from one generation to the next. As they sing, they engage with their neighbours, fostering a sense of community and belonging that is essential in Ethiopian culture.

While urbanization and globalization have influenced many aspects of life in Ethiopia, festivals like *Buhe* provide a counterbalance, allowing people to reconnect with their roots. This celebration is a vibrant expression of cultural pride, where traditional music, dance, and attire come together to create a colourful spectacle that captivates both participants and onlookers alike.

The cultural significance of *Buhe* in Ethiopian society cannot be overstated. It is a celebration that encapsulates the essence of community, tradition, and resilience. Through singing, sharing dining, lighting bonfires, and honouring their heritage, Ethiopians come together to celebrate not just the end of the rainy season but also the enduring spirit of their culture. As each year passes, *Buhe* continues to be a cherished reminder of what it means to belong, to share, and to celebrate life together.

While urbanization and globalization have influenced many aspects of life in Ethiopia, festivals like *Buhe* provide a counterbalance, allowing people to reconnect with their roots

significance. Celebrated primarily in the highland regions, *Buhe* marks the end of the rainy season and the beginning of the harvest, symbolizing renewal and gratitude. This festival, which takes place on August 19th, is a time when communities come together to celebrate the fruits of their labour, both literally and metaphorically. The cultural significance of *Buhe* extends beyond mere festivities; it embodies the values of unity,

Global Affairs

Green Legacy Initiative: A national commitment to global cause

BY FITSUM GETACHEW

This year's slogan for the Green Legacy Initiative is "A Nation that plants, a generation that sustains" and 7.5 billion tree seedlings will be planted in order to reach the milestone of 40 billion by the end of this rainy season. During the launching ceremony of this year's Green Legacy Initiative, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed called upon all to continue being a part of this year's program. The prime minister along with his deputy Temesgen Tirunch and the staff of the Prime Minister's Office were engaged in planting indigenous Green Legacy seedlings within the Chaka Compound.

The goal for this year is to reach 40 billion tree seedlings and in order to give more emphasis to the campaign, a special day of planting tree seedlings has been fixed for 23rd August in which 600 million tree seedlings will be planted in a day. This is a record compared to other similar initiatives carried out by Ethiopians. Ethiopia has so far planted 32.5 billion trees in five years. While planting new tree seedlings the process of uprooting eucalyptus and replacing them with indigenous varieties has continued.

Prime Minister Abiy said, Ethiopia's Green Legacy Initiative has created conducive environment to expand indigenous knowledge on soil preservation across the country.

On the occasion of the planting of trees on the Chaka Project, community members drawn from Harar and Konso have participated in the planting activity by working on terraces in order to stop the problems with soil erosion in the surrounding area. It was in that regard that the eucalyptus trees were replaced by indigenous trees.

During the program Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed said that this year's Green Legacy Program will be carried out differently from the previous years. The main focus will be on preserving soil erosion because it has been a hindrance in planting seedlings due to soil erosion. At present indigenous plants including fruits like apple are being cultivated.

The premier further underscored the need to expand similar indigenous knowledge that exists in other areas across the nation commending the farmers of Harar and Konso for completing the work on the terraces in a short time.

According to the premier activities are underway to increase the forest coverage of Addis Ababa to 30 percent with the objective to change the image of the city as many cosmopolitan cities in the world.

Records have shown that the Green Legacy Initiative (GLI) has already begun to bear fruits as the forest coverage of the country



The GLI is laudable and a great motivator to climate action and an outcome was shared with other countries

has increased from 17 percent in 2019 to 23.6 percent by 2023.

Deputy Premier Temesgen Tirunch also remarked that Ethiopia's Green Legacy Initiative is shifting its focus this year to prioritize the cultivation and planting of indigenous trees. He said the goal is to maximize the direct benefits of citizens from the initiative launched five years

ago. The deputy premier also said he was satisfied with the significant increase in Ethiopia's forest cover since the program's inception. He said that the government's plan to plant 7.5 billion tree seedlings this year is already well underway. Temesgen added the program will boost agricultural productivity, enhance tourism and improve soil and water conservation.

He highlighted that the program will create favourable conditions for the successful implementation of the country's agricultural development initiatives including wheat cultivation. By replacing water intensive eucalyptus trees with indigenous species the government aims to optimize water resources and combat the effects of climate change.

Similarly head of the prime minister's office and minister of cabinet affairs Alemtsehay Paulos said the GLI has created favourable opportunities for Ethiopia's environmental conservation works based on indigenous plants. The minister said the office staff participated in planting indigenous plants for the second time this year. She said the office staff had previously planted fruit tree seedlings in areas prepared with indigenous terracing techniques. She added that Ethiopians without distinction have been participating in the Green Legacy Program and achieving impressive results. She stressed the need to continue with this collective effort with renewed vigour in the coming year as well.

Head of Ethics and Anti-corruption at the Office, Tsige Berhanu said the GLI is not only about environmental conservation but also an integral part of achieving food security and self-sufficiency. The program enables the passing down of a better

country to future generations stressing that this is the responsibility of every citizen.

Similarly, minister of planning and development said the GLI has significantly contributed to the increment of the national forest cover. Speaking on a high level panel discussion on the GLI, Fitsum said the initiative has brought about positive impact in terms of forest cover and environmental rehabilitation efforts. She elaborated the benefits of the GLI are multifaceted and transcend to neighbouring countries and the world at large. Fitsum further underscored the government's firm determination and commitment to building a climate resilient economy. Ethiopia has been encouraging African countries to join its tree planting campaign through providing tree seedlings urging the international community to support Ethiopia's tangible efforts.

Global Green Growth Institute country representative Okechukwu Daniel Ogbonnaya said on his part that the GLI is laudable and a great motivator to climate action and an outcome was shared with other countries. The country representative emphasized the need for other countries to emulate Ethiopia appreciating Ethiopia's continuous efforts to restore, conserve, enhance forest and create sustainable landscape management overall.

Meanwhile Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed has called on all Ethiopians to make history by planting 600 millions tree seedlings in one day on August 23 breaking their own previous record. The prime minister also urged the public to put their legacy across Ethiopia with a unified spirit adding that "when we come together, we can achieve more."

Law & Politics

Zooming in on Special Economic Zones

BY STAFF REPORTER

Ethiopia has been taking a list of measures to refurbish its infrastructural facilities while adding new ones. Having already put in place big and bold economic reforms, the country also faces various setbacks that need multitude of layers. To meet the growing demands of its burgeoning youthful population and unlock the untapped potentials of its abundant natural resource, the country is toiling to create jobs and allure investment.

And, in an effort to expedite economic growth and improve the livelihoods of the people, more investment and development projects are needed. From parks to bridges, the country is carrying out the construction of various infrastructural projects. From the capital to the far-flung of the nations, the government has been building lots of infrastructural facilities.

Currently, Addis is going through a dynamic turnaround that serves as a harbinger that the future bodes well for the city and the country as well. The Africa's capital is undergoing a rapid transformation that is a sign of good things to come for both the city and the nation. Public parks and other facilities are being built as part of the corridor projects, which is now under way and will have a significant positive impact on the city and surrounding areas. In addition to endowing the city with a distinct appearance and allure, the building and enlargement of infrastructure projects reveal more about the aspirations of the nation.

The government is making every effort to come up with more projects since the city needs more initiatives that enhance the quality of life for its citizens. The incumbent has, in reality, been working really hard to advance the manufacturing and industry sectors as well to spur national growth.

The government has been investing in the creation of special economic zones across the nation in addition to other initiatives. In the past, the government established the Gada and Addis Tomorrow Special Economic Zones in the Addis Ababa and Oromia state, respectively. Economic zones facilitate corporate development and investment acceleration, which in turn drives the growth of manufacturing and industry sectors.

Due to their geographical demarcation, which includes a variety of typologies such as industrial parks, free ports, and urban business zones, these areas provide incentives for capital and commerce.

Free and Special Economic Zones facilitate business by offering a laxer regulatory framework and a range of



incentives. Effectively administered zones can foster the development of the local workforce by facilitating the knowledge and skills transfer of outside investors. In light of the government's recent emphasis on industry growth, economic zones will be essential to the process. Investor participation in the zones will also be contingent upon the large natural resources and the growing youth population.

The ongoing construction of the corridor projects public parks and other facilities has been in full swing bringing lofty dividends to the city and beyond. Besides giving a peculiar look and beauty to the city, the constructions and expansions of infrastructural projects foretell more about the country's ambition.

With the city requiring more projects that improve the well-being of its residents, the government is doing its level best to come up with more projects. In fact, the incumbent has been making the utmost effort to promote manufacturing and industry sectors.

Economic Zones provide opportunities to cultivate business and expedite investments ultimately leading to the expansion of manufacturing and industry sectors. Special economic zones will serve as a major source of jobs for the country's growing population while enticing foreign direct investment and facilitating trade.

Due to their geographical demarcation, which includes a variety of typologies such as industrial parks, free ports, and urban business zones, these areas provide incentives for capital and commerce.

Special Economic Zones will attract foreign direct investment, facilitate trade,

and provide a significant source of jobs for the nation's expanding population. After Gada is finished, it will become the second free trade area after Dire Dawa and be a component of the Lume Free Trade Zone. Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed began building the Addis Tomorrow Special Economic Zone in the city center last week.

The launching came as Addis Ababa City Administration and China Communications Construction Company (CCCC) entered an agreement for the construction of the special economic zone. It will be situated on 35 hectares of land is imperative to foster business and investment.

This is the start of our big dream of making Addis Ababa attractive as its name 'New Flower' refers to, and my gratitude goes to CCCC and the city administration for kicking start this project," Abiy said.

According to the Prime Minister, the Addis Tomorrow Special Economic Zone will be connected to other economic areas whose constructions are underway in other parts of the capital through the ongoing Addis Ababa corridor development.

Abiy said the economic zone is part of the government's commitment to transforming Addis Ababa into one of the most beautiful cities in the world by building smart communities with various facilities, including residential houses, shopping malls, hotels, and recreational centers.

In her address, Addis Ababa Mayor Adanech Abiebie stated that the economic zone is a huge project like building a new city within a city.

According to Mayor Adanech, the project includes large malls, residential apartments, offices, educational institutions, health facilities, and extensive recreational and water bodies as well as sports centers.

"The economic zone will give our city a new look, enhance its international competitiveness, become an additional source of beauty, create ample jobs for residents, facilitate trade, become a large international shopping center, and include infrastructure that will provide social services," she remarked.

Free and Special Economic areas ease business by providing a more relaxed regulatory environment and various incentives. Well-managed zones also help build the capabilities of the local workforce as outside investors share expertise and know-how. Now that the government is paying special attention to the expansion of industries, economic zones will prove vital along the way. The burgeoning youth population and the vast natural resources will also be vital ingredients needed by investors to take part in the zones.

Building Special Economic Zones, however, is not an end; it requires recruiting vibrant manufacturers and businesses. In this regard, the government needs to encourage small and medium enterprises to grow in capital and production.

If timely and efficiently completed, the economic zones with the right policies and infrastructure can boost economic development and change the livelihood of the population.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

October to December 2024 Seasonal Forecast: Drier-than-normal conditions are expected in the eastern Horn of Africa as western parts are likely to experience above-normal rainfall

The IGAD Climate Prediction and Applications Centre (ICPAC) issued the seasonal forecast for October to December (OND) 2024, a critical rainfall period for the equatorial regions of the Greater Horn of Africa (GHA). The forecast indicates an increased likelihood of drier-than-normal conditions over the eastern parts of the Horn of Africa. Southern Ethiopia, much of Somalia, eastern Kenya, and parts of central and southern Tanzania are expected to experience below-normal rainfall, with the highest probabilities in southern Ethiopia and central and northern Somalia.

In contrast, western parts of the region, including south-eastern South Sudan, northern Uganda, western and north-western Kenya, northern Tanzania, southern Burundi, and parts of western Rwanda are likely to experience above-normal rainfall, potentially supporting agricultural productivity, pasture generation, and water resources availability.

An early to normal onset is expected in much of the western parts of the region,

including south-western Ethiopia, Uganda, western Kenya, Burundi, Rwanda, and western Tanzania. On the other hand, late onset is anticipated in parts of southern Somalia, eastern Kenya, eastern Tanzania, and southern Ethiopia.

The temperature forecast indicates an increased likelihood of warmer-than-average surface temperatures across the GHA, with eastern parts of Tanzania, Kenya, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Sudan, Djibouti, and Somalia expected to experience the highest probabilities of warmer-than-average conditions. In contrast, average to cooler-than-average temperatures are anticipated in cross-border areas of Uganda, South Sudan, Ethiopia, and Kenya, as well as localized areas in northern Tanzania and western Sudan.

The October to December 2024 forecast—which predicts drought in the eastern parts of the region and wetter conditions in the west—highlights the collective need for urgent and coordinated action to address food insecurity and climate challenges in the region.

H.E. Dr. Workneh Gebeyehu, the Executive Secretary of IGAD, notes that the pressing challenges facing the region are exacerbated by extreme climate events and socioeconomic factors: “Food insecurity continues to persist in the IGAD region, with 56.5 million people currently facing acute shortages. Disease outbreaks, worsened by severe climate events and conflicts, are adding to the strain. The climate outlook for the October to December 2024 season shared today underscores the urgent need for coordinated preparedness efforts by national governments, development agencies, and humanitarian partners. Together, we must prioritize early action for building resilient systems capable of addressing these evolving challenges”

Dr. Eng. Festus K. Ng’eno, Principal Secretary - State Department for Environment highlighted the significance of early warning systems stating: “The effectiveness of these systems depends on our collective action. We need to invest in the development and maintenance of these systems. We need to ensure that warnings reach every-

one, including the most vulnerable communities. And we need to educate people about the risks of climate change and how to respond to early warnings.”

In addition, Dr. Abdi Fidar, the Officer-in-Charge at ICPAC emphasized the importance of early warning information, such as seasonal forecasts for regional planning and informed decision-making: “This outlook is crucial for planning across the region. The predicted drier conditions in the eastern Horn of Africa, coupled with ongoing food insecurity, demand coordinated timely action from relevant stakeholders to mitigate potential impacts.”

In line with the World Meteorological Organization's guidelines and recommendations, ICPAC has adopted an objective seasonal forecast method to generate climate forecasts for the Greater Horn of Africa. August 2024 initialized seasonal forecasts from 9 Global Producing Centres were utilised and processed to develop the OND 2024 seasonal climate outlook.

Source: ICPAC

Mpox cases are soaring in Africa – what must be done to prevent a global pandemic

Alarmed by the surge in mpox cases, the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention has taken the unprecedented step of declaring the outbreak sweeping through African countries a continental public health emergency. A day later, the World Health Organization declared that the outbreak constitutes a global health emergency.

These moves come after a virulent strain of the disease spread rapidly to 16 countries and six new countries were affected in 10 days.

There have been 15,132 mpox confirmed cases in Africa since the beginning of 2024. Some of the countries affected are Burundi, Cameroon, Congo, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria, Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of Congo, South Africa, Uganda and Kenya.

Virologist Cheryl Walter sets out some of the reasons the mpox outbreaks are so worrying.

How many strains of mpox are there and which ones should we be worried about?

Mpox is one species of pox virus, such as smallpox and cowpox, characterized by a rash followed by bumps that appear on the skin. With mpox the bumps then fill with liquid and eventually scab over.

As we’ve come to know through diseases such as COVID-19, viruses change genetically and mutate quite quickly.

Mpox is no different, although pox viruses typically mutate much more slowly compared to other viruses, such as HIV. HIV changes approximately every three times a single virus replicates.

There are two strains of mpox – clade I and clade II. Think of them as two big branches on a tree.

Until about five or six years ago these clades weren’t that diverse.

Something has changed. These branches are growing and the leaves on the branches are becoming more numerous. In fact, we have new subclades for both I and II, so two new offshoot branches have appeared.

Clade II is far less dangerous with a case fatality rate of about 0.1%. In other words, roughly one person in a thousand dies.

Now scientists are seeing thousands of cases of clade I being reported in 16 countries in Africa and a case fatality rate of anything from 3% to 4%. That means three or four people in a hundred die. Many cases are children.

Let’s use COVID-19 again as a comparison. It was declared an international public emergency from 30 January 2020 to 31 December 2021, with an estimated case fatality rate of 1.2%.

Mpox is a relatively understudied virus. Until recently there were a handful of confirmed cases every year. It occurred primarily in tropical rainforest areas of central and West Africa. There was very little opportunity for the virus to adapt to a human host.

We don’t understand if genetic changes are making these viruses spread more easily and if the variants in circulation are more dangerous.

We do know the virus is changing and moving through lots of people. Viruses can only mutate when they’re passing through a host such as a human.

The more people it passes through, the more opportunity it has to change and potentially become more virulent or more transmissible.

Now this virus is moving through lots of peo-

ple, there are lots of these opportunities.

How does the disease spread to new areas?

The virus spreads through contact such as sharing utensils, plates, towels and bedding.

Women and children are disproportionately affected through skin-to-skin contact because they are close to each other every day. Children play games in schools and creches and touch objects and each other all the time.

Viruses also spread easily when people live in densely populated, low income areas and can’t isolate themselves because they have to bring in an income.

Two of the other reasons mpox spreads quickly is the longer incubation period and vague symptoms.

The incubation period ranges quite widely from five to up to 21 days. A person can become infected with mpox during this period and travel to another country and transmit the disease to others.

The initial symptoms are vague and include swollen glands, fever and feeling a bit run down. It is estimated 10% of people infected with mpox are asymptomatic.

It’s only when the rash appears that it might become apparent that it’s not a cold or flu or COVID-19.

To add to that challenge, when children get those rashes they could be mistaken for chickenpox or one of the other childhood infectious diseases.

What emergency measures need to be put in place to ensure the outbreak doesn’t explode into a pandemic?

There are a couple of things stacked against

African health agencies trying to contain the virus.

There are few resources to fight this disease and the shortage of vaccines is a major problem. The Africa Centres for Disease Control estimates there are only 200,000 doses available to African countries compared with a demand of at least 10 million.

However, there’s still a lot that can be done.

Testing: This is the number one tool in this fight. We need to know where these cases are and who in the community mpox is passing through. We also need to use this data to trace contacts. We can do this with simple lateral flow tests – using a swab of the nose and/or throat that can be done in the community and give results within 30 minutes.

Messaging: In the previous outbreak across the world, a lot of communications that were going out were aimed at sex workers and men who have sex with men. As a result, people may have thought that this is only a sexually transmitted disease. It’s not.

Now women and children are getting the virus, so communities need to be told what symptoms to look for and what action to take.

Vaccinating: Because mpox is so similar to smallpox, we can use that vaccine. However there are limited stockpiles and we can’t manufacture smallpox vaccines quickly enough. The WHO has called for vaccine candidates for fast approval and distribution.

These measures and others need to be taken urgently to contain and to repress this epidemic before it potentially becomes a global pandemic.

Source: The Conversation

Planet Earth

National Green Legacy Initiative is far more than tree planting

BY SOLOMON DIBABA

This year, Ethiopia is ready to plant more than 7 billion trees across the country through the National Green Legacy Initiative which has been in full operation for the last five years.

Several decades back, about 40 per cent of the landmass of Ethiopia was reportedly covered by natural forest. Excessive dependence on bio-fuel for firewood at household level, alarming deforestation and land clearing for agriculture, climate change induced drought and run off from the highlands of the country leading to degraded lands, over grazing by livestock all led to unprecedented densification and loss of natural flora and fauna of the country. Ethiopians in the rural and urban areas heavily depended on bio-fuel resources with no effort to replace them.

The NGLI is not just about planting billions of trees every year. Notwithstanding the essence of the campaign in popular parlance, there is more to the NGLI. The author of this article wishes to dwell upon five important issues that relate to the wider understanding and implementation of the program.

Of course, the Initiative is a home grown effort to restore the ecosystem in Ethiopia and in this respect it is a national undertaking in form. However, the content of the program is certainly global and universal.

First, the writer believes that qualitative and scientific reporting on the achievements of the program is very important because tree planting must be accompanied with scientific national reporting and documenting system that could be used for various purposes. Such reports could serve as a point of departure for deeper scientific research on the nature of the flora in the country, their species, ecological compatibility, survival rate and the level of their adaptability to fluctuations on weather conditions.

The extent to which the NGLI is promoting watershed management in rugged areas of the country and how the program is becoming instrumental in restoration of the natural vegetation of the country can be reported in a more quantified manner.

In many parts of the country where watershed management has been conducted, many of the wild animals who fled their original habitat tend to come back to their localities in view of the fact that surface water and vegetation have now been restored. The GLI has proved to be instrumental in promoting the survival and restoration of wildlife across the country.

Moreover, students at all levels including universities and other research centers can use these reports not only as a source of raw data but also as sources of new findings in scientific cognition of the Ethiopian forest resources. In addition, trees planted across the country could be a showcase on educating the young generation of this country on how the planted trees could help to restore soil and water resources of the country and help to recover the alienation between nature and human beings.

The reports to be prepared annually on the progress of NGLI could be documented in the form of online reporting and preparations of video footages that could be reinterpreted by



researchers in the field of botany, plant science, herbarium and other related areas of research.

The national report on GLI also needs to include the history of the planted trees from nursery to the planting site and the rate in which the trees survive over time. The types of trees planted including specific fruit trees and trees that could be used for herbal medicine can be properly documented.

Second, it must also be noted that the NGLI is not a standalone national project but needs to be perceived as an important component of the national macroeconomic development of the country. This would mean that there is an important linkage between agriculture, wildlife conservation, tourism development, education, health research and conservation of indigenous species of plants that could be used for the economic development of the country. The initiative needs to be blended and integrated with program implementation of the various sectors of the national economy and current national development campaigns like Yelemat Trufat and Ethiopia Tamirt programs. Ethiopia needs to diversify and develop foreign export which could include forest resources from the GLI

Third, the author is of the opinion that the digitalization of the NGLI will not only help to develop an updated national reporting on the program but will also help to share knowledge on developments on the vegetation in the country. In this respect, The Ethiopian Space Science Society and ground satellite facilities can provide reliable scientific information on the overall progress of forest development in the country.

Fourth, Ethiopia possesses traditional plants and herbs that used among the population to help cure various diseases. Similar traditional medicines are also prescribed by traditional healers very few of whom are recognized and certified by the Federal Institute of Public Health. More than 7,000 herbal, mineral and animal medicinal resources out of which 1,500 are ingenious are so far recorded. Although researchers have been conducted on some 70 types of herbs, only 13 have been identified as viable herbal medicines while 5 are registered at the Ethiopian Intellectual property office. Researches indicate that there are 14,000 persons who practice herbal medicine in the country but only 40 of these are registered and certified by the Ministry of Health.

This has also stunted the growth of the sector.

Fifth, one of the most important aspects of the GLI is the legal technical prerequisite for the protection all of the trees planted across the country. Just like any natural resources of the nation, these trees need to be legally protected by instituting legal provisions that provide for the protection of flora in the country.

It is to be recalled that Ethiopia has also embarked on World Bank sponsored carbon projects which were introduced as a means of reducing thousands of tons of carbon in the earth's atmosphere to make our earth more habitable while generating more income for communities in the project areas.

The author of this article is conscious of the fact that thousands of herbs and trees and species of indigenous crops have been smuggled out of the country to be planted in foreign countries in illegal manner. Just like our heritages that have been looted over the course of several decades the Ethiopian ingenious plants are also being looted. The Ethiopian Bio-Genetic Institute is operating at its level best to conserve our indigenous plant species some of which are close to extinction. The Institute is working with international partners and stakeholders to institute effective protection of our indigenous plant resources which also are being subjected to the effects of climate change.

The outputs from NGLI could be maximized through institutional and technical cooperation and integration between all stakeholders in the country not only on planting trees but also on establishing and creating a practical operational link to the national macroeconomic development of the country including ecotourism resorts in the context of tourism development.

The author is again of the opinion that the GLI could be supplemented with the development of household woodlots, backyard bio-intensive vegetable gardening and community owned woodlots for food security, income generation and environmental protection.

Along with planting trees every year, the communities across the country could use the occasion for cross cultural exchange and peace building in their respective residential areas. This is an important occasion on which participants from various ethnic groups, professions and age groups come together to share their experience while developing a common culture of tree

planting.

This year's GLI coincided with a massive corridor development initiative that was introduced by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed as part of the national program for promoting clean and green cities all along the country. Corridor development was accompanied with planting ornamental trees along road sides and centers adding more beauty to Addis Ababa in particular.

The NGLI also added a new feature to the development of a comprehensive macroeconomic policy developed by the country over the last several years as an offshoot of the Home Grown National Economic Policy introducing a new and the first of its kind macroeconomic policy in Africa. This is a unique national plan in the sense that it blended climate change mitigation with economic development policy.

In terms of foreign policy and diplomacy, the NGLI was instrumental in forging Ethiopia's diplomatic relations with the neighboring countries and the international community and global agencies at large. Despite the challenges the country has continued to face, it helped to further strengthening the visibility, positioning and rooting Ethiopia among the nations of the world.

Nevertheless, the Initiative will certainly influence the sectoral development programs of the country with a special emphasis on education. It would help to create a climate sensitive generation which would develop and care for the forest resources of the country as a heritage for their future livelihood.

The author wishes to stress on the need for effectively documenting the achievements so far registered in the form of educational films for children and the youth. This is very important to ensure the transfer of GLI to the next generation of Ethiopians who are expected to develop it to a higher level.

There is no doubt that a lot has been achieved in promoting the GLI in Ethiopia but even then, there is more to be done by way of ascertaining the sustainability of the initiative.

However, much depends upon the extent to which Ethiopians are ready to work towards a sustainable peace in the country because promoting green legacy in the country is best served when lasting peace is achieved in the country. Although the road may seem to be uphill battle Ethiopia shall inevitably prosper.