

## E-COMMERCE

# Glancing Ethiopia's digital leap via e-commerce expansion

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

Ethiopia has taken significant steps to bolster its digital economy by implementing policies that encourage innovation and entrepreneurship, investing in digital infrastructure, and improving the regulatory environment to support e-commerce and digital trade.

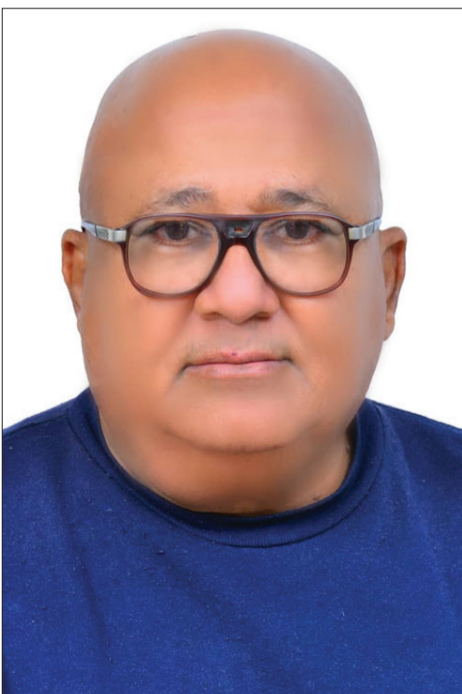
Under the ambitious "Digital Ethiopia 2025" initiative, Ethiopia aims to leverage digital opportunities and transition towards a knowledge-based, innovative economy. This strategy has attracted both national and international private sector investments, particularly in digital solutions to meet the needs of the country's expanding market. Some of these partnerships are expected

to benefit society by driving a digital revolution.

As part of its strategy, several foreign companies have entered the Ethiopian market, offering their services through fair competition. Recently, Alibaba, one of the

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## Ethiopia, Djibouti: Strengthening ties for shared prosperity, stability



Abdul-Baqi Al-Asbahi

BY STAFF REPORTER

ADDIS ABABA- Experts are calling for a stronger and more diversified bilateral relationship between Ethiopia and Djibouti to enhance peace and economic development for both nations and the region.

Speaking to the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA), Horn of Africa and Red Sea Affairs Specialist Abdul-Baqi Al-Asbahi emphasized the importance of reinforcing the economic, political, and social ties between Ethiopia and Djibouti. He noted that the longstanding fraternal relationship between the two countries is based on a shared vision, with deep-rooted partnerships in various sectors such as railways, ports, water, electricity, and communications.

between Ethiopia and Djibouti have significantly boosted economic growth and the welfare of their peoples," Al-Asbahi stated, suggesting that this relationship could serve as a model for other countries in the region.

Political Analyst Musa Sheikho highlighted the role of political will and the enlightened vision of both countries' leaders in fostering this relationship. He pointed to the annual ministerial meetings between Ethiopia and Djibouti as key mechanisms for strengthening strategic partnerships across political, economic, and social fields. Mutual visits by the leaders further solidify these ties.

Sheikho described the relationship between Ethiopia and Djibouti as enduring and resilient,

"The partnership and economic integration

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Minister Muferihat Kamil

## Ethiopia launches training program for 20,000+ TVET trainers

BY MESERET BEHAILU

ADDIS ABABA – Ethiopia has initiated its first comprehensive training program for over 20,000 trainers to enhance understanding of policies, reforms, and disciplines, the Ministry of Labor and Skills (MoLS) announced.

During a press briefing yesterday, MoLS Minister Muferihat Kamil revealed that the ministry has launched the first-ever Training of Trainers (ToT) program for 23,957 Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) instructors across 17 centers nationwide. The primary goal of this training is to foster a unified understanding among trainers in all technical and vocational institutes regarding policies, reforms, and professional conduct.

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Sahrta Abdulahi

## Ethiopia drives forward electric vehicle adoption

BY ASHENAFI ANIMUT

ADDIS ABABA - The Ethiopian Petroleum and Energy Authority (EPA) announced it is developing a national e-mobility strategy to accelerate the advancement of electric vehicles (EVs) in Ethiopia. The EPA recently organized a panel discussion in collaboration with the Ethio-Germany energy cooperation, focusing on the intersection of electric vehicles and the green economy. The event was attended by ministry representatives, private stakeholders, and other dignitaries.

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# News



## Ethiopia pushes for digitized audits, int'l standards in financial oversight

BY YESUF ENDRIS

**ADDIS ABABA** – The Office of the Federal Auditor General is advancing efforts to digitize audit processes and align national auditing manuals with international standards.

Speaking to *The Ethiopian Herald*, Deputy Auditor General Abera Tadesse revealed that the office is currently developing legal frameworks and procedures to enable the use of digitized data in audits. He also disclosed that the national audit manual is being revised to meet international standards, marking a significant enhancement in the office's operations.

In partnership with the African Organization of English-Speaking Supreme Audit Institutions (AFROSAI-E), the office is working to improve its capacity and effectiveness in implementing Financial and Compliance Audit Manuals. "Ethiopia is now among the countries performing at a higher standard, though some gaps still need to be addressed," Abera noted.

Despite these advancements, the office is facing challenges due to a shortage of

auditors. Currently, there are only 670 experts, falling short of the required 1,000, which has led to gaps in audit coverage. Financial constraints and outdated legal frameworks are also contributing to the lack of staff permanency.

However, Abera expressed optimism that these issues will soon be resolved, with measures already underway to address them.

On international cooperation, he highlighted that the office maintains regular relations with 24 AFROSAI-E member countries, which supports its members in enhancing human capacity, legal frameworks, and procedures. As an auditing organization, AFROSAI-E promotes the independence of its institutions, facilitating the exchange of best practices in audit performance and standards among member states.

Experts from the Office of the Federal Auditor General are currently participating in a workshop hosted by OFAG Ethiopia and organized by AFROSAI-E, with representatives from other member countries also in attendance, *The Ethiopian Herald* reported.

## Ethiopia's road network expands with 20-bln USD investment

• Some 142,500 km constructed in 26 years

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

**ADDIS ABABA** – Ethiopia's road infrastructure expansion is progressing rapidly, with the Ministry of Urban and Infrastructure announcing that approximately 142,500 km of roads have been constructed over the past 26 years.

The Ethiopian Roads Administration (ERA) recently held its 7th annual road research conference, themed "Sustainable Road Infrastructure Development and Management through Research." During the conference, Urban and Infrastructure (MoUI) State Minister Wondimu Seta (Eng.) highlighted the government's efforts to expand the country's road network to bolster national socio-economic development.

"This expansion follows the establishment of the Ethiopian Roads Administration and the efforts led by the national road sector development program (RSDP) over the past 26 years, with an investment exceeding 20 billion USD," Wondimu stated.

He noted that significant progress has been made, with the national road network increasing from about 26,500 km in 1997 to over 169,000 km in 2023. Road density has risen from 24.1 km per 1,000 square km in 1997 to 148.3 km in 2023, and the average distance to access all-weather roads has decreased from 21 km to about 4.4 km.

Wondimu explained that the RSDP aims to enhance the institutional capacity of the road sector, focusing on three key pillars: contractors, consultants, and professionals.

"Key concerns in the sector include cost, quality, safety, environmental impact, and road users' satisfaction, all of which require significant improvement. The sustainability of domestic construction companies is also a pressing issue, as many struggle to establish themselves within a corporate framework," he added.



Wondimu Seta (Eng.)

The construction sector contributes roughly 20% to the Ethiopian urban economy, providing the second-largest source of employment and income for citizens, with about 2 million job opportunities. It is also a significant source of government revenue through corporate profit tax and employee income tax.

"On average, 58 to 60% of the nation's capital budget has been allocated to the construction industry over the years, which has seen an 11% annual growth rate that is expected to continue," Wondimu noted.

However, he pointed out several challenges facing the industry, such as institutional inefficiencies, poor construction project management, and a lack of professionalism.

Conferences like the 7th annual road research conference are vital for sharing innovative ideas and groundbreaking research, as well as for discussing the challenges and opportunities in road infrastructure and technology.

"Together, we have the opportunity to shape the future of road research and development towards a more efficient and sustainable transportation network for all," Wondimu concluded.

## Ethiopian-born ambassador to lead Kamala Harris's presidential transition team

BY STAFF REPORTER

**ADDIS ABABA** - Ambassador Yohannes Abraham, an Ethiopian-American diplomat, has been appointed to head the presidential transition team for Kamala Harris, the Democratic contender in the upcoming U.S. Presidential Election.

Currently managing the daily operations for Kamala Harris, Ambassador Yohannes brings previous experience in leading a presidential transition team. Born in Ethiopia, he is serving as the U.S. ambassador to Southeast Asian countries from his post in Jakarta, but he is set to return to Washington, D.C. soon.

If Vice President Kamala Harris successfully defeats her opponent, Donald Trump, Ambassador Yohannes

is expected to play a significant role in forming the new administration's transition team and contributing to policy development.

A U.S. State Department spokesperson highlighted Ambassador Yohannes's contributions to enhancing U.S. relations during his two-year tenure as envoy to Southeast Asian countries. His leadership was also noted in the 2020 transition team for President Joe Biden, according to an NBC News report.

Ambassador Yohannes, 42, has an extensive background, including eight years of service in the White House during Barack Obama's administration. He holds a bachelor's degree in political science and a master's degree in business administration, both with top honors.



# News

## Minister stresses need for producing quality products

**ADDIS ABABA** - Trade and Regional Integration Minister Kassahun Gofe reiterated the necessity of producing goods in sufficient quantity and quality in order to be competitive in the global market.

A panel discussion, which focused on export and regional integration issues, was held with the pertinent stakeholders today.

Speaking on the occasion, the trade and regional integration minister said Ethiopia has untapped resources and agro-ecology that contribute a lot to productivity.

However, he noted that much is expected to be done to fully realize the country's capacity to produce products to the global market in quantity and quality.

"We should be competitive by turning out sufficient quantity and quality products that meet the needs of the international market," the minister stressed.

However, Kassahun stated that efforts the shortage of foreign currency has been a challenge for a long time, putting a lot of pressure on export trade.

In this regard, the recent macroeconomic reform would contribute a lot toward resolving



*Kassahun Gofe*

this and other related problems, he added.

A panelist from Addis Ababa University, Andualem Goshu said only 14 percent out of the over 60 percent of arable land is being cultivated in Ethiopia.

Nothing that the country has the potential to benefit from the international markets by boosting productivity, he added that utilizing the potential to maximize export earnings is crucial.

According to him, the implementation of

the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and Ethiopia's membership in BRICS as well as the ongoing negotiations to WTO accession will stimulate export.

Ethiopian Pulses, Oilseeds, and Spices Processors and Exporters Association President, Edao Abdi said Ethiopian products are preferred in the international markets and there is a favorable geographical proximity to some of the markets.

He also underlined the importance of increasing quality and quantity of products based on the needs of the international market, supporting processes by technology and adding value.

The president further underscored the need for a well financed agriculture sector as most of Ethiopia's export commodities come from the agriculture sector

Improving and modernizing the transactions and capacity building is also imperative, he added.

The half-day panel discussion highlighted on mainly accelerating export earning by effectively seizing opportunities and addressing challenges faced in the various sectors, ENA reported.

## Glancing ...

world's leading retail platforms, launched operations in Ethiopia. Innovation and Technology State Minister Yesherun Alemayehu (PhD) highlighted that the strategic partnership with Ali Express demonstrates Ethiopia's potential and readiness to be a significant player in the global digital economy.

The Ministry of Innovation and Technology (MiNT) has been working diligently to transform Ethiopia into a tech-driven, innovation-led society. From developing the National Digital Economy Strategy to expanding e-government services, the ministry's efforts align with the needs of a modern digital economy. The collaboration with Alibaba Group is expected to open new opportunities for Ethiopian SMEs, enabling them to participate in global trade.

With the launch of an e-commerce hub, Ethiopian Airlines has positioned Ethiopia as a focal point for digital trade, facilitating efficient and seamless transactions that connect the country to the world. The Airlines has set a new standard for e-commerce infrastructure in Africa, aligning perfectly with Ethiopia's national vision of empowering the private sector and fostering an enabling environment for e-commerce to thrive.

Digital Transformation Ethiopia Association (DTEA) Deputy President Bahiru Zeyenu noted that the country is making strides in its digital transformation journey. The growth of e-commerce services, a critical part of the digital economy, will help ensure an inclusive digital system. He emphasized that the launch of Alibaba's Ali Express, utilizing Ethiopian Airlines as the main logistics hub, marks a significant step forward. Additionally, with existing e-commerce and e-government services, new international platforms like Ali Express will pave the way for increased investment.

The introduction of these platforms will boost productivity and offer consumers more choices and higher-quality products due to competition among business providers. "A digital economy cannot be built without including rural areas. Experiences from other countries, such as China, show the importance of modernizing rural areas with adequate infrastructure," Bahiru added.

He also pointed out that without reliable electricity and internet access, it is impossible to implement e-commerce services effectively. Therefore, the government needs to identify priority areas for infrastructure development to make e-commerce accessible to the public and connect Ethiopia to the global market. Alongside infrastructure development, fundamental changes are needed to make digital infrastructure more accessible.

## Ethiopia, Djibouti: ...

noting its strength since Djibouti gained independence from French colonial rule. The historic railway line connecting Ethiopia and Djibouti, which served as a crucial transportation route in East Africa for nearly six decades, symbolizes the deep economic, political, social, and cultural links between the two nations.

"The relationship is progressing stronger than ever, particularly in economic and political partnerships," Sheikho remarked. "As members of the Intergovernmental Authority

on Development (IGAD) and the East African Development Community, (EADC), both countries play a pivotal role in ensuring peace and stability in the Horn of Africa."

The analyst also highlighted the cultural and social connections between Ethiopia and Djibouti, including the overlapping nationalities of the Afar and Somali people in both countries, which further align their interests.

Ethiopia's status as the seat of the African Union and numerous international organizations,

along with its ongoing development projects in agriculture, industry, and tourism, contributes to the strengthening of relations with Djibouti, Sheikho added. He emphasized that security, economic, and political issues are shared concerns, with developments in one country inevitably affecting the other.

The deep-rooted ties between Ethiopia and Djibouti, bolstered by shared cultural and familial bonds, continue to strengthen, offering a promising path forward for both nations and the region.

## Ethiopia launches ...

"Competence for TVET excellence is the central theme of this training," Muferihaht emphasized.

She further explained that the training aims to improve the capabilities of trainers, enhance the sector's image, and ensure a consistent approach among educators. Key aspects of the training include promoting new ideas in the field, understanding the role of trainers, appreciating education and training policies, fostering entrepreneurship education, developing soft skills, innovation in pedagogy, digital integration, professional identity, and enhancing training quality in TVET.

Muferihaht also highlighted that out of 38 reform initiatives undertaken by the ministry, 11 are focused specifically on TVET.

"The training sessions are being conducted in several cities, including Jima, MizanTepi, Wachamo, Hawassa, Arba Minch, Haromaya, Arsi, Jijiga, Bahir Dar, Wollo, Gondar, Mekelle, Assosa, and Addis Ababa, as well as their surrounding areas," she noted.

The Minister underscored MoLS's commitment to skills development aimed at creating competent and proficient citizens on an international scale. Other key ambitions of the ministry include shifting from a supply-led

to a demand-led training model, restructuring institutes based on development plans and available resources, expanding demand-based short courses, and transforming TVET institutes into centers of entrepreneurship and productive enterprises.

Additionally, Muferihaht highlighted other strategic focus areas, such as integrating patriotism and vocational ethics into institutional culture, promoting manufacturing and engineering, strengthening soft skills, advancing modernization, enhancing partnerships between government and the private sector, and supporting technology banks to bolster skills development.

## Ethiopia drives forward electric vehicle...

PEA Director-General Sahrila Abdulahi highlighted that the government is undertaking various initiatives to transform the petroleum sector into a reliable e-mobility sector, contributing to the country's socioeconomic development. She mentioned the establishment of a national steering committee and efforts to identify opportunities to incentivize private sector engagement in the EV industry.

"The authority has implemented digital payment transactions within the fuel system, processing over 233 billion Birr through electronic transactions in the past two years,"

she stated. However, she noted that the expansion of the parallel market has negatively impacted the digital clean transaction system, emphasizing that fuel transaction and monitoring remain a priority focus.

Electricity Sector Technical Regulation Director Bahiru Oljira stressed the need for the government to prioritize the EV sector by developing comprehensive strategic frameworks and policy shifts to stimulate growth. He pointed out that electric vehicles play a crucial role in reducing carbon emissions and fossil fuel dependence,

supporting Ethiopia's innovation and sustainable development goals.

Given Ethiopia's macroeconomic challenges, including its landlocked status and high fossil fuel consumption, Bahiru highlighted the importance of strengthening the EV-green economy nexus. He noted that Ethiopia spends approximately 4.6 billion USD annually on fossil fuels, affecting the import-export balance.

Mintesnot Gizaw (Asst. Prof.), a researcher and lecturer in Renewable Energy at the

Environmental Engineering Department of AAU, emphasized the critical need to leverage Ethiopia's abundant renewable energy resources. He advocated for the deployment of low-carbon technologies to foster a climate-resilient green economy. He also noted that the EV sector significantly contributes to the nation's sustainable development goals and job creation.

During the event, recognition awards were presented to high-performing fuel station companies that have successfully adopted digital transaction systems.

# Opinion

## Grand Abbay Dam myriad significances

BY MENGESHA AMARE

If one requests what is the gravity dam on the Blue Nile River in Africa, Ethiopia, they can have a response of the Grand Abbay Dam, previously known as the Millennium Dam. It was commenced in 2011 in Benishangul-Gumuz state of Ethiopia, about 14 kilometers east of the border with Sudan, and being constructed with a view to generating more than 5,000 megawatts. It is strongly believed that the dam would double Ethiopia's electricity production, to which only half the country's population of over 120 million currently has access.

It is well recognized that Ethiopia started damming the Abbay River for the purpose of boosting electric generation, facilitating flood protection in lower areas, expand irrigation, controlling sediment, entertaining navigation and expanding fishery production. Yes, the Grand Abbay Dam will be the largest dam in Africa upon completion with 1,800 meters long, 155 meters high. It will create a reservoir covering 1,875 square kilometers and contain 74 billion cubic meters of water.

Here, one of the staples of the dam and major industry advantages is its usage in hydropower and electrical generation. There are several environmental advantages of hydroelectric power including its flexibility, affordability, and the perks of being a renewable resource.

Being water tower of Africa, the owner of a number of rivers, lakes and many more water bodies, Ethiopia has now been well utilizing its resources for economic development and progress. The main motivation that the Ethiopian government has given for building the dam is hydropower production to increase electrification, accelerating industrialization and to sell power to neighboring countries.

Furthermore, the importance of damming the river is aimed at expanding water reservoirs since this move helps foster flood prevention, boost holding water for irrigation, and expand fishery and many other recreational purposes. Needless to state, Ethiopia has been trekking at the right track and showing remarkable changes in due source of utilizing the water resources, but Egypt has tried to make some sort of attention diversion. The progress of Ethiopia regarding hydropower development has been bearing fruits, and such a viable move has been well pronounced and capitalized on.

The Dam is on the Blue Nile tributary in the north west of Ethiopian highlands, from where 85% of the Nile's waters flow. It is Africa's largest hydroelectric dam project. This grand project has to be well nurtured and treated for the socio-economic benefit of Ethiopia and

other riparian countries predominantly for Egypt and Sudan. The dam's power will also help benefit Sudan, Kenya and Djibouti, all of which are connected to Ethiopia's grid and will begin importing power from it. Ethiopia has been doing so as for rural electrification as its 65% of the population has led life in darkness.

As electricity is the future and the lifeblood of modernization especially in the era of transformation, the means to generate electricity needs to be given due attention and sources, dams, have to be well expanded. As the colossal dam is near completion, its 3rd and 4th unites began power generation, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) announced last Sunday and it promises to set the country on a path to industrialization that could lift thousands of millions of citizens out of poverty.

No doubt, Ethiopians see building the dam as a fundamental right, one that could bring electricity to more than half of Ethiopians who don't have access at home. Egyptians see their fate potentially falling into foreign hands as they heavily dependent on Nile water. The very important thing that needs to be taken into account in this regard is Ethiopia, which built the dam largely with its own financial power, wants the reservoir full and generating the maximum electricity as soon as the Dam is completed.

As history would have it, dams have served society for over 4500 years. Through time, functions and uses have been notably altered and gradually modified. There has been a significant proliferation in purposes for constructing dams to control stream flow and secure water storage. Technological changes have been paralleled with construction of ever-larger dams to gain control of larger water supplies like the Grand Abbay Dam. This splendid dam in east African nation is of paramount importance in bolstering environmental and societal benefits of the entire community. The size of the Dam is a reflection of the changing dependence of society on specific water services. As nature has its rhythm of change, the challenge is to fit human use into nature with minimal adverse environmental impacts. As with agriculture, dams have become part of the domesticated landscape, indeed!

Ideas of water management arose among people subsequent to the agricultural revolution and the inception of urbanization. By the time that hydraulic societies formed, a certain body of collective experiences possibly provided model and incentive for government authorities to impose their will upon a water management system. The 70 islands around this grand dam would be of great significance in creating job opportunities and helping the nation secure foreign currency gained from foreign tourists.

Water is a multi-faceted resource commanding universal attention and fostering structured management systems. The dam belongs in the public domain because the water it controls is to serve the public at large and not any particular interest group. Yes, it has been constructed using the financial capacity drawn from the entire society ranging from street vending poor woman to high profile investors, beloved fellow compatriots.

Since dam construction is a socially and economically conditioned response to identified community needs, the construction of the Grand Abbay Dam is comparatively recent in this chronology and is a marker in the trajectory of the history of technology.

As stated earlier, the dam is primarily used to store water, control flooding and generate electricity. Besides, it provides various advantages for communities and other many more advantages. This grand dam is an important structure that is constructed for the purpose of water storage. The water held by it, generally from a channel, can later be used for generating electricity and used for irrigation purposes as well as promoting flood control.

Needless to cite, Ethiopia has followed a number of steps to construct this grand dam like building up an area to help divert water in order to properly create structure. Engineers usually implement tunneling systems to help in diverting water from existing rivers, creating a foundation is the next step in construction of dams, assembling the overall structure of the dam, too.

Without a shadow of doubt, the resource is renewable given that it can be used repeatedly downstream for power generation. Hydropower can be stored or diverted and is one of the most eco-friendly means of producing power.

One of the major advantages of the Grand Abbay Dam is its eco-friendly feature. Because the dam uses as a renewable resource, it helps reduce emissions of greenhouse gasses like carbon dioxide.

Since the dam suffice riparian countries especially the three major ones, Ethiopia, Egypt and Sudan, collaboration for its safety and eternal duration should come at the forefront. However, Egypt's politicians have jumped at the chance to portray Ethiopia as the cause of crisis pushing millions of Egyptians into darkness and poverty. This is a baseless allegation emanated from neglecting the right purpose of the dam.

The dam's promise of regular electricity is as a potent symbol of change in Ethiopia since economic growth in Ethiopia has been stifled by a lack of electricity and industry margins have been hollowed out by the nightmare unpredictable power cuts almost on a daily basis. It

is also well recognized that Ethiopia's lack of electricity has been contributing to an economic lag that in turn has left the country in an immensely precarious situation. This trend has to be well seen off. Ethiopia is right this time about to complete the construction of the dam and declare hydropower independence.

It is also well comprehended that Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed launched power generation of the 3rd and 4th turbines at the Grand Abbay Dam and stated that the dam will significantly boost hydropower generation, clean energy production as well as bolstering agricultural productivity.

The launch of these turbines is indeed a major milestone for Ethiopia as it aims at regulating water flow, reducing flood risks, and ensuring a reliable water supply for neighboring nations, too.

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

With the launch of the new turbines, Ethiopia is poised to become a significant energy producer in Africa. The dam is expected to generate over 5,000 megawatts of electricity, which will not only meet domestic demands but also allow for energy exports to neighboring countries. This shift will foster clean energy production, regional cooperation and economic growth. The Grand Abbay Dam is set to provide numerous advantages for Ethiopia and its neighbors. To mention but a few, it would improve agricultural productivity through regulated water supply, enhance power generation capacity for regional energy needs, and mitigate flood risks in downstream areas, among others.

Generally, as a result of administration determination and firm public commitment, Ethiopia has been in a position to compete the construction of the largest dam in the African continent using its own financial muscle. True, the country is arduously working to make its lack of electricity history and avert an economic lag that in turn has left the country in an immensely precarious situation.

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

# Editorial

## Ethiopia's commitment to lasting peace deserves global support

It was on November 2, 2022, that the government of Ethiopia and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) signed the Pretoria Peace Agreement to end the two-year-long conflict that took the lives of thousands of people and displaced millions.

Following the pact, Ethiopia has been taking a number of measures and applying all the available resources to commendably implement the agreement and ensure lasting peace and stability.

Despite the backdrops, both parties have made significant progress in implementing the terms of the agreement accordingly. In turn, realizing the fundamental element of the accord, "Permanent Cessation of Hostilities" and silencing the guns has been possible.

Since the time the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement was signed, activities related to the provision of unobstructed humanitarian assistance to those who were in dire need of support and the resumption of basic services, such as electricity, water, telecommunications, transportation and banking, were realized productively.

The other bold steps that Ethiopia implemented subsequent to the agreement were the establishment of the Tigray Interim Regional Administration and the return of internally displaced people to their respective areas.

In line with this, a credible and participatory transitional justice process was also introduced to address the widespread human rights violations and abuses, correct unwarranted narratives, and lessen the grudges and resentments committed by individuals and group perpetrators in many parts of the country over the earlier and recent years.

To this end, a draft roadmap which encompasses wide-ranging activities that are intended to be carried out during the implementation phase has also been prepared. The process, when it becomes fully operational, is expected to bring about permanent solutions to the problems, achieve universal justice, sustain the rule of peace, and ensure lasting peace through a reconciliation process tailored to Ethiopia's unique context.

In like manner, the National Dialogue Commission was established to reach a national consensus on the most fundamental issues of national significance by conducting national dialogues and identifying the root causes of division and inconveniences among the people of Ethiopia.

Currently, both initiatives have implemented a series of activities that lay the foundation to embark on the final step and they are on the right track to achieve the planned goal.

However, despite the efforts and the achievements attained so far, there are still some issues that are not progressing at the desired level though they should be fast-tracked. The Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) process is the one in this respect.

Obviously, undertaking a sweeping disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration program is of critical importance to promote peace and stability as well as to minimize the recurrence of conflicts. However, this is not a simple task that can be accomplished without problems, because the process demands a huge amount of capital, which is more testing in the current Ethiopian context.

As various studies on DDR indicate, DDR programs are costly. Their implementation requires resources, which are usually covered by external actors like the UN and the World Bank, among others.

Hence, development partners, international organizations, and the international community should support Ethiopia and stand by its side in all its energies exerted to effectively implement the Pretoria Peace Pact. They have to committedly underpin the country's effort in all possible ways, especially in the Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration endeavors, as well as the National Dialogue and Transitional Justice programs to promote justice, lasting peace, unity and prosperity across the country; and at the end of the day to make the pact a complete success.

# Opinion

## Important topics that Ethiopians should agree on

BY SOLOMOND DIBABA

First, almost all Ethiopians have collective attitude and desire on the protection of the sovereignty, territorial integrity, peace and socio-economic development of their country. Whenever foreign aggressors encroached into the territory of the country, the vast majority of Ethiopians of all walks of life took to the battle fields to defend their country. Suffice it to mention the victory at the Battle of Adwa, repeated victories against Egyptian, Turkish, Somali and Italian invaders.

Second, upon the onset of natural and man-made disasters, Ethiopians tend to have compassion for each other and are willing to share what they have. During the periods of war, Ethiopians have continued to support the members of the defense forces by directly mobilizing resources and delivering them at the battle fronts.

Third, Ethiopia is a country of religious tolerance and respect. This has been practiced for ages among all the ethnic groups and religious denominations. Despite attempts made in the past to sow religious discord and conflicts, Ethiopians have been able to withstand all kinds of pressures to introduce religious conflicts across the country.

Fourth, as a mosaic of ethnic groups, Ethiopians have continued to enjoy cross cultural exchanges and sharing of cultural values that are common among them.

Fifth, over the last five years Ethiopians have demonstrated that they can work together in implementing the National Green Legacy Initiative which is supported by the entire population in the country. Moreover, Ethiopians lost no time to finance the Ethiopian flagship project GERD which is a living symbol of unity among Ethiopians. Even if there are differences in outlook Ethiopians of all ages and professions here and abroad joined hands in effectively building their own dam which is now close to final completion.

Six, most Ethiopians have a common and positive understanding of the importance of the unity among African countries in promoting pan Africanism and economic integration among African countries. Ethiopians have supported the peace keeping efforts that Ethiopian has conducted under the auspices of the UN and AU across the world and in Africa.

Seventh, Ethiopians believe in the importance of pulling resources and energy to exploit the natural resources of the country for promoting tourism industry in the country, which among other sectors is expected to be the future backbone of the Ethiopian economy.

Eighth, under the current conditions in which the country is forced to face the multi-faceted challenges of internal and external conspiracy, the importance of having constructive positive thinking should even be more pronounced than ever. The nation can avert these conspiracies only when citizens stand together on common and collective thinking of maintaining the unity, peace and development of their country.

To promote collective thinking among Ethiopians, several strategies can be employed across different sectors of society. Creating platforms where diverse groups, including ethnic communities, gender groups, and professional sectors, can share their ideas and perspectives at all levels.

Organizing community dialogues, town hall meetings, and other public forums that allow citizens to discuss national issues openly will promote democratic collective thinking. Integrating collective thinking skills into the educational curriculum to teach students how to collaborate, debate, and solve problems together

Using media to raise awareness about the importance of collective thinking and how it can benefit society. Utilizing digital platforms and social media to encourage discussions and collaborative problem-solving among Ethiopians across different regions helps to cement collective thinking.

Using online tools to gather ideas and solutions from a broad base of the population on pressing national issues will not only help to foster collective thing but will also promote national dialogue.

Promoting traditional Ethiopian practices that emphasize collective decision-making, such as the "shengo" (community meetings), and adapt them to modern contexts.

Encouraging exchanges between different ethnic and cultural groups within Ethiopia to foster mutual understanding and collective thinking is a workable option to create a common understanding on different issues.

Establishing government policies and non-governmental organization initiatives that support collective thinking and problem-solving at the national level is vital for promoting collective thinking.

Encourage participatory governance models where citizens have a direct role in decision-making processes. Promoting the formation of cooperatives and joint ventures that encourage collective ownership and decision-making in business and agriculture is another strategy that could be pursued.

Supporting community-based projects that require collective input and effort, such as local infrastructure development and environmental conservation helps to enhance common level of collective thinking.

Launching campaigns that emphasize national unity and the common good, highlighting the importance of working together for Ethiopia's development is also a viable strategy. Publicly recognizing and celebrating successful examples of collective thinking and action, setting positive precedents for others to follow.

By implementing these strategies, Ethiopians can strengthen their collective thinking abilities, which will help address social, economic, and political challenges more effectively and foster a more united and prosperous society.

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The Ethiopian Herald

# Business & Economy

## Optimizing broadening market destinies of horticulture

BY ABEBE WOLDEGIORGIS

It is proved that Ethiopia is rich in natural resources with diversified agro-biodiversity manifested by vast arable lands, water resources suitable for cultivating fruits, vegetables and flowers.

Horticulture is cultivated in small, medium and large size widely particularly in the humid zones of the country. The sector enables to create job opportunities to hundreds of thousands, enhances irrigation farms and utilizes skilled and semi-skilled labor and technology. It also plays pivotal role in expanding commercial farming, supplies its products to local and foreign markets. It also supports the ongoing efforts to ensuring food security. It is also instrumental in increasing farmers' income.

Cognizant of the value of the sector for job creation and foreign currency earnings, due emphasis has been rendered by the government and cooperation with the regional institutions is underway.

Recently, the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) East African Community Horticulture Accelerator Program (CEHA) Ethiopia National Chapter was launched on August 13, 2024 in the presence of various stakeholders. On the occasion, the advisor of State Minister of Agriculture, Professor Ali Mohammed said that with its rich agricultural heritage, favorable climate and dynamic private sector, is poised to be a key player in regional horticulture transformation.

He further said that horticulture is a strategic sector for COMESA countries to focus on in order to drive economic diversification, ensure food and nutrition security, enhance regional integration and sustainable development.

CEHA is an exciting new initiative that aims to drive sustainable growth and development in the horticulture sector across the COMESA and East African Community (EAC) regions. With its rich agricultural heritage, favorable climate and dynamic private sector, Ethiopia is poised to be a key player in this regional horticulture transformation, he affirmed.

According to him, the establishment of Ethiopian CEHA national chapter is timely and a critical milestone. The Ethiopia CEHA national chapter will serve as the central hub to coordinate, catalyze and accelerate horticulture development in Ethiopia, with particular focus on the three anchor value chains; potato, avocado, and onions, the state minister elaborated.

Accordingly, the chapter will bring together key stakeholders and provide support for micro, small and medium enterprises in these selected value chains through matching grants and technical assistance aiming to create employment, increase regional trade and minimize post-harvest losses.

Alliance for Commodity Trade in Eastern and Southern Africa (ACTESA) CEO, John Mukuka noted that the launch of the COMESA, East African Community (EAC) Horticulture Accelerator Program (CEHA) Ethiopia National Chapter is critical. The CEO affirmed the readiness of ACTESA to further reinforce its commitment in the effort to accelerate Ethiopia's horticulture



Some of horticulture products



transformation.

Ethiopian Horticulture Producers and Exporters' Association Executive Director, Tewodros Zewdie pointed out that the national chapter is instrumental in building the capacity of producers, enhancing quality and resolving logistic related challenges.

Stating that the CEHA Ethiopia national chapter will create an opportunity to further elevate the competitiveness of Ethiopian producers and exporters, he said efforts will be further reinforced to be more competent in the region and beyond.

During the launching ceremony, Ministry of Agriculture, COMESA ACTESA and Ethiopian Horticulture Producers and Exporters' Association signed Memorandum of Understanding to further accelerate the activities undertaken to exploit the huge potential of the sector in the country. Farmers engaged in producing the crops utilize both traditional and modern technology. According to studies, the demand for vegetables in the urban centers is growing. Therefore, if the sector is boosted to the higher commercial level, in addition to meeting the demand, it enables to create job opportunities to thousands.

Horticultural crops are rich in vitamins, carbohydrates and other nutrients that contribute to a major portion to an Ethiopian daily dish mix. Some nutritional deficiencies like vitamin A and C, and iron can be corrected by use of selected vegetables and root crops as well as fruits. In some areas of the country, root crops particularly potatoes and sweet potatoes are used as staple food for considerable portion of the population. Root crops in general and sweet potato in particular are drought resistant and serve as security food crops in drought prone areas.

Furthermore, vegetables and root crops generate foreign currency earnings in the

country. Horticultural crops play a significant role in developing countries like Ethiopia, both in income and social spheres for improving income and nutrition status. In addition, it helps in maintaining ecological balance since horticultural crops species are so diverse. Further, it provides employment opportunities as their management being labor intensive, production of these commodities should be encouraged in labor abundant and capital scarce countries like Ethiopia.

Because of the cereal based food and production habit of farmers, horticulture was a neglected sector. However, traditionally different fruits and vegetables, cabbages, enset, pepper, shallot has been produced by small farmers but recently exotic ones are also becoming important in commercial production. Even though horticultural crops' production in Ethiopia has been small compared to other crops; currently fruit, vegetable and root and tuber crops are widely produced in all regions of the country with different intensities of about an area of 0.55 million ha with 60.78 tons of harvest.

The irrigation potential of the country is estimated to be about 3.7 million hectares. Of the total potential, only about 20% to 23% of this potential is put under irrigated agriculture for both traditional and modern irrigation systems.

The existing irrigation development in Ethiopia, as compared to the resources potential that the country has, is not significant and the irrigation sub-sector is not contributing its share accordingly. There has been also a steady increase in the demand for different horticultural crops production for local markets, export and processing sectors. Horticulture has been contributing immensely to the country's economic growth and development as the major export earning, however, the effort in the development horticultural commodities such as vegetables, fruits, root and tuber crops have been very much limited because of numerous production constraints.

The Central Statistics Authority (CSA) data is for rainy (Meher) season report, however most vegetables are produced under irrigation and give better yield. Besides the scattered small farmers, private investor cooperatives unions that are increasing in number also produce different fruits and vegetables for local and export markets.

The overall productivity of the crops is lower in farmers' fields compared to the private investors' field. The private farms have better option to use better technologies and hence better productivity. Limited private production of fruits and vegetables like Strawberry.

According to the Ministry of Agriculture, the Government has identified key priority intervention areas to increase productivity of smallholder farms and expand large-scale commercial farms. Among the top priorities identified include: small and large-scale irrigations for horticulture development, agricultural inputs supply financing, increasing productivity of crops, improving agricultural production methods using mechanization, post-harvest loss reduction, developing research-based food security system, and natural resources management.

**H**orticultural crops play a significant role in developing countries like Ethiopia, both in income and social spheres for improving income and nutrition status

# Art & Culture



## The World Nomad Games in Kazakhstan and African game of Oware: A bridge between cultures through traditional games

BY STAFF REPORTER

Traditional games have always been an integral part of the cultural heritage of nations around the world. In various corners of the Earth, they reflect lifestyles, philosophies, values, and even the skills necessary for survival in different environments. In recent years, there has been a growing interest in preserving and popularizing these traditions through international events and festivals, such as the World Nomad Games. One of the bright examples of cultural wealth includes the nomadic games held in Kazakhstan and the traditional African game of Oware (also known as "mancala"). Both of these phenomena unite different peoples, despite geographical and cultural differences, showing how games can serve as bridges between continents and traditions.

### World Nomad Games: Reviving ancient traditions

The World Nomad Game is an international sporting event that gathers representatives of nomadic peoples from all over the world. Initially, the games were organized in Kyrgyzstan, but in 2024, the right to host them was handed to Kazakhstan, a country where nomadic traditions and the spirit of the steppe still play a significant role in national identity.

The program of the World Nomad Games includes many disciplines reflecting the nomadic way of life. Among the most famous competitions are belt wrestling ("kazakhsha kures"), horse racing, archery, and equestrian games such as "kokpar" (a game resembling polo but using a goat carcass instead of a ball). These games are not just sporting contests — they represent a deep immersion into nomadic traditions, demonstrating skills essential for survival in the steppe.



Today, almost all peoples of Africa and Asia have similar games. In West Africa, these include oware and owa, while in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, there is "togyz kumalak," and in India, games such as "pallanghuzi" and "olinda kaliya" are popular. The rarest game in this family is the three-row "gabata" from Ethiopia and Somalia, while the most complex are the four-row "bao" and "omweso" from Central Africa. There are many names, and the number of rows, holes, and stones vary, but the basic principles remain similar: occupy a hole that gives you the right to capture stones from your opponent, and ultimately accumulate more stones than your adversary.

### African Game of Oware: Ancient wisdom in a strategic game

Oware is one of the oldest and most widespread games in the world, known by different names across various countries in Africa and the Middle East. It belongs to the family of mancala games, where players move seeds or stones across holes on a board, aiming to capture as many as possible.

The origins of oware are lost in antiquity, and it is believed to have emerged in Ancient Egypt or modern-day Ethiopia. Over time, the game spread across the continent and became an important part of the cultural life of various African societies. Oware not only develops strategic thinking and logic

but also teaches patience and respect for the opponent. The game is often used to pass down cultural values and traditions from one generation to the next.

### Uniting cultures through games

**Staff reporter: What unites the world nomad games and the African game of Oware?**

At first glance, these seem like two completely different worlds — dynamic and physically demanding nomadic games and the calm, strategic African game. However, upon closer inspection, it becomes clear that both serve as important cultural markers, preserving the traditions of their peoples.

Both nomadic games and oware emphasize the importance of community and the transmission of knowledge. During the world nomad games, it's not just athletes competing — the event brings together entire families, nations, and nomadic peoples, fostering cultural exchange and the preservation of traditions. Similarly, Oware is not just a pastime but a significant element of cultural heritage that still plays an important role in the social life of many African peoples.

In a modern world moving towards globalization, cultural traditions and customs are often at risk of being lost. However, events such as the world nomad games and the preservation of ancient games like oware show that traditions can not only survive but thrive, uniting nations through shared values and respect for the past.

These games serve as a reminder of how crucial it is to preserve and pass on traditions that form an integral part of a people's identity. Whether playing oware or watching horse racing in the Kazakh steppes, we are not just enjoying entertainment, but are becoming part of the centuries-old history and wisdom that humanity has accumulated over its long journey.

## Discovering inner self

BY SENAIT G/HIWOT

There is something I learned in life... and it is expecting people to like you all the time are useless.

In my naive state of mind I used to care a lot about what others think of me. It is a big deal when they disagree or dislike something I care

about.

Now that I think of it... it is their brain right not mine?... so why am I really obsessed about what they think?

They can disagree all they want, it is their right but it is not going to affect me like it used to.

And I also stopped being clingy to avoid moments of loneliness and embraced it. If I

am not sure I will have a quality time with a person I will not even bother engaging in small talks.

This personality of mine came after many trail and errors... mainly identity crisis.

I used to repel the idea that I was an introvert and try so hard to be like the extroverts I see... I use to envy them. Later I realized that my

behavior is also perfectly fine... I just had to accept it.

When I started writing I discovered my inner self that is beautiful and worthy and it just needed my approval.

So expecting people to like you or agree with you is a waste of time. Instead find what really makes you happy in life and go for it!

# Global Affairs

## Roll up the sleeves, do something, says Astrid Schomaker, new UNCBD head

“We are living in a time where nature is regularly raising its hand and saying, ‘Look, I’m here and I’m in trouble,’ and then bringing us all sorts of natural disasters to the table,” says Astrid Schomaker, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (UNCBD), in an exclusive interview with IPS.

“And,” she emphasizes, “The world is beginning to recognize that we have to have a different relationship with nature. Luckily, we already have a framework to do that.”

Since taking the reins of the UNCBD in July—less than three months before the 16th Biodiversity Convention of the Parties (COP16) is held in Colombia—Schomaker has been a leader in a rush. From preparing for the COP to coordinating with Colombia, the COP presidency and global leaders who will be attending the conference, while also presiding over a number of meetings and communicating the urgency of timely implementation of the Global Biodiversity Framework, Schomaker has a damaging schedule.

There are three COPs this year—all within a short span of three months and the CBD COP16, scheduled to take place from October 19–November 1, is the first of them. Schomaker is looking at this as a huge opportunity to send out a message to the other COPs.

“Unless we have a different way of interacting with the earth’s natural resources, we will not succeed on biodiversity, but also certainly not on climate change. And if that comes out and there is meant to be a new coalition launched at the COP that Colombia will be piloting, I think we will send a super strong message to the other conventions and I’m sure they will hear it and pick up on it.”

### Coordinating with other UN conventions

But a successful COP will also depend on how well CBD can collaborate with other COPs, as the issues - biodiversity, climate change and drought is also closely linked. Schomaker asserts that she is on the right track, coordinating closely with other conventions as well as other UN agencies.

“I’ve been working with all these other conventions and processes as well, because for us to make this Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) a success is to make sure that the UN system pulls together and that governments also reflect on their own way of working,” she explains, that biodiversity is not sector specific where environment ministries alone can run it, but one in which other ministries and stakeholders are needed to make this framework a success.

### From green diplomacy to biodiversity

Schomaker, however, is not new to multi-agency collaboration and coordination. She begins the interview by sharing glimpses into her previous role at previous role at the European Commission’s Environment Department, describing it “a bit of warm-up” for her current position as the head of UN CBD.

### Schomaker appears in agreement with that and talks about an all-inclusive resource mobilization strategy to meet the unmet goals in biodiversity financing

“My last job was the Director for Green Diplomacy and Multilateralism. So, previously, I did it for a group of 27 countries. Now I work with 196 member states. Previously, I covered, so to speak, environmental governance and all assessments, including biodiversity, but also the chemical conventions and how all these conventions work together. Now I’m more focused on biodiversity—this is very much about everybody coming together.”

Schomaker also describes this as a “super exciting opportunity” to be able to work dedicatedly on biodiversity at a time “when the world has sort of heard the wake-up call”.

### COP16: Challenges, hopes

Barely eight weeks from now, world leaders will be heading to Cali, Colombia, to attend the first COP since adopting a new global plan in Montreal to protect at least 30 percent of the earth’s biodiversity by 2030. The past two years have seen a slew of activities, including structuring the implementation mechanism, supporting countries to revise their individual biodiversity action plans and setting up indicators for measuring the progress of the implementation. According to Schomaker, there are, however, several issues that need urgent attention at Cali.

“I think in Montreal (which is dubbed Biodiversity’s Paris moment), we managed to be more successful than in Paris, because we already had our monitoring framework and its broad outlines agreed at the same time. So that was actually a great success,” Schomaker says, continuing with a candid assessment of the challenges.

“But there are many areas that need extra

focus. First of all, for the parties now need to move from this political agreement into implementing it and into aligning what they’re doing nationally with the targets and goals of the framework. And as you know, we have this National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans (NBSAPs) as our key instruments for implementation; those need to be revised, and the parties have committed to revising those national action plans, or where they cannot do that, at least to come forward with targets by COP16. And for me, this is a bit like the proof of the pudding.”

### A push for inclusiveness

But it is resource mobilization that tops Schomaker’s list of priorities, including raising money from private sector investors. The UN Biodiversity Convention aims to mobilize at least USD 20 billion per year by 2025 and at least USD 30 billion per year by 2030 for biodiversity-related funding from all sources, including the public and private sectors. However, so far, the actual pledges have been just about USD 300 million, while the contribution has been less than USD 100 million.

In May of this year, the then acting Executive Secretary David Cooper told IPS that the world needed a clear roadmap to bridge this wide financing gap.

Schomaker appears in agreement with that and talks about an all-inclusive resource mobilization strategy to meet the unmet goals in biodiversity financing. She is especially pushing for greater inclusion of business and thinks contribution from private business could unlock the investment that has been missing so far.

“Business, I think, plays a super important role. It was really great to see the private sector show up in force in Montreal. I think we’re now expecting a greater mobilization for Cali. So business is very, very aware of their role, of both their dependencies and their impact.”

“As you know, there are compelling figures on the relationship between nature and business, which is worth USD 44 trillion,” reminds Schomaker, referring to the New Nature Economy Report of the World Economic Forum. Published in 2020, the report highlighted that USD 44 trillion of economic value generation—over half the world’s total GDP—is moderately or highly dependent on nature and its services and, as a result, exposed to risks from nature loss.

“So, I think that’s important if you continue to work with business and make sure that they have the tools to understand what the impacts and dependencies are. And we will provide a lot of space for that also at the COP, the Business and Biodiversity Day and many other activities, for sure,” she says.

### Staying positive

But, despite the challenges ahead, Schomaker doesn’t want to sound all gloom and doom. Instead, she is looking at each development, however small, as a sign of positivity and hope.

In fact, on the day of this interview, the CBD had been leading a crucial meeting on Digital Sequencing Information conference in Montreal. DSI discussions center on the fair and equitable sharing of valuable benefits from digital sequence information—the digital versions of plant, animal, and microorganism DNA—and are generally considered one of the most contentious issues among biodiversity negotiators from the global north and the global south. But Schomaker asserts that there are reasons for hope. One of them is planning to launch a DSI fund.

“As you know, COP15 has already decided that there should be a mechanism and a fund for Digital Sequence Information for the benefits to be paid—the benefit from the use of digital sequencing information from genetic resources. So, one of the options is that the Global Environment Facility (GEF) might manage this fund.

“But overall, I can say that the discussions that I’ve been witnessing over the past few days and this morning are very, very constructive. And this is not to downplay that there are different perspectives, but I think everybody has come here saying, ‘Okay, we’ve taken a decision at COP15 and that decision told us we’re going to have that mechanism, we’re going to have a fund and we need to operationalize it. And our deadline is Cali,’” Schomaker says.

### States must take the lead

As the chief of UN Biodiversity, Schomaker has already dived into action, but she doesn’t mince words while pointing out that the UN can only be a facilitator—the real power and the responsibility to make decisions lie clearly with the states. This is especially important to remember because to kickstart the implementation of the GBF, countries need to submit their revised, more ambitious NBSAPs but until today, only 14 of the 196 signatory countries have done so.

“We are looking at how these big planning processes, the NBSAPs and then the NDCs under the Climate Convention, and how these things can also be done in better coordination, also at national level, with each other, remain a big challenge. The second thing, and I’ve already hinted at that, is this idea that if we want to be successful in combating biodiversity loss, of course, governments need to take the lead,” she emphasizes.

### “Do something”

Finally, when asked what message she would have for anyone heading to COP16, Schomaker has a clear answer: Signing of the GBF proved that there was enough political commitment, but it should not be seen as an event that was “just a beautiful moment, where energy came together, and everybody just had good moment together, and the stars were aligned.”

Instead, she says, “It’s time to roll up the sleeves and do something.”

Source: *Inter Press Service*



# Law & Politics

## LAPSSET: Regional partnership, connectivity

BY DANIEL ALEMAYEHU

Regional integration and connectivity is the key to achieve socio-economic development for the African continent. African nations from all corners have been trying to establish a well-organized regional system. What the nations in the Horn of Africa have been working on is all about regional integration and connectivity.

Nations in the region have been working on realizing a region that registers better regional development. Those plans to connect the regional countries one another is also cognizant to the African Union's (AU) Agenda 2063 which is dubbed 'The Africa We Want'.

According to African Union official website, "AGENDA 2063 is Africa's blueprint and master plan for transforming Africa into the global powerhouse of the future. It is the continent's strategic framework that aims to deliver on its goal for inclusive and sustainable development and is a concrete manifestation of the pan-African drive for unity, self-determination, freedom, progress and collective prosperity pursued under Pan-Africanism and African Renaissance."

Again, it is the re-dedication of Africa towards the attainment of the Pan African Vision of an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens, representing a dynamic force in the international arena and Agenda 2063 is the concrete manifestation of how the continent intends to achieve this vision within a 50-year period from 2013 to 2063.

They continental frameworks, as to the African Union, include the Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Program (CAADP), The Program for Infrastructural Development in Africa (PIDA), The African Mining Vision (AMV), Science Technology Innovation Strategy for Africa (STISA), Boosting Intra African Trade (BIAT), Accelerated Industrial Development for Africa (AIDA).

Under the Program for Infrastructural Development in Africa (PIDA), African stakeholders to build the infrastructure necessary for more integrated transport, energy, ICT and trans-boundary water networks to boost trade, spark growth and create jobs. As a multi sector program, PIDA is dedicated to facilitating continental integration through improved regional infrastructure and implementing.

Both long and short agendas designed by the African Union, they are all about creating a better Africa for its entire people. Albeit the home for so much natural and human resources, Africa have been struggling to achieve its development agendas.

Though there are still numerous, yet unanswered challenges that make the road to development hard for African nations, the Horn countries have been trying their best to realize regional integration through infrastructure. The development of various highly-standard infrastructure brings a number of benefits for land locked nations



like Ethiopia. Having numerous choices make things easy for Ethiopia to undertake its import and export activities coupled with investing on similar projects.

The Djibouti Corridor is the best example regarding regional connectivity. It is a strategic economic portal that gives landlocked Ethiopia access to the country's ports. The upgrades on the corridors will strengthen the two countries' positions in the global trade market via its seaports. This is a pilot project designed to support the initiative's second focus area, boosting trade and economic integration in the region.

The development of the Djibouti Corridor and rehabilitation of the existing spur roads will make way for robust trade facilitation. Creating digital economic portals and opportunities will decongest the cross-border logistics traffic thereby improving the delivery of services and support the downstream industries.

Similarly, as the importance of connectivity in the Horn is paramount, the three Horn nations: Kenya, Ethiopia and South Sudan have already started to implement regional connectivity through the Lamu Port South Sudan - Ethiopia Transport (LAPSSET) Corridor Project. It is the single largest, integrated, transformative, and game-changer infrastructure Project in Africa.

Based on the statements sent to *The Ethiopian Herald* Newspaper, the 4<sup>th</sup> LAPSSET Ministerial Council Meeting was held from 21 to 22 of August 2024, in Lamu, Kenya under the theme "Unleashing Potential: The LAPSSET Corridor as a Catalyst for Sustainable Development, Seamless Connectivity, Regional Integration, and Trade." The event was attended by government officials, representatives from Ethiopia, Kenya, and South Sudan, development partners, and business leaders.

Delivering an opening statement at the meeting, Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), Stephen Karingi, stated that the strategic economic corridor, LAPSSET aims to connect the three footprint countries through

a network of roads, railways, pipelines, fiber cables, ports, airports and special economic zones.

"It is a testament to our collective vision for a connected and prosperous Africa. This transformative corridor development initiative promises to unlock immense potential for economic growth, regional integration, particularly in the context of the AfCFTA."

"As a component of the Program for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA), LAPSSET is crucial to the actualization of a connected Africa. It has also been key to the progress Africa made under the pillars of the Vienna Program of Action, particularly in addressing the unique challenges faced by Land Locked Developing Countries through advocacy on transit policy, infrastructure development, international trade, and regional integration," the director stated.

Stephen Karingi, as to the statement, sent four key messages to the participants. He forwarded that the three countries should prioritize the closing of missing infrastructure links in the LAPSSET Corridor. Again, the second message that the director forwarded state that the three countries should advance the priority value chains identified for development along the economic corridor with a regional lens.

The third message of the director is to the private sector and development partners. Realizing the full potential of the LAPSSET Corridor requires continued commitment, strengthened partnerships, and a focus on sustainable development. The last but not least, the director sent his message saying Africa has good examples on development corridors. One key success factor is a good coordination mechanism.

The director also disclosed the upcoming 3rd Conference on the Land Locked Developing Countries that will be taking place 10 - 13 December, 2024 in Gaborone, Botswana.

According to the press release, the LAPSSET Corridor program in Eastern Africa

promotes trade and cultural exchange, with Lamu playing a key role. The Joint Technical Committee (JTC) plans to finalize a regional coordination mechanism by September to maximize corridor benefits in partner states.

Mr. Isati Mame, the Governor of Lamu, extended a warm welcome to government officials, delegates, stakeholders, and all participants in the region. He emphasized the LAPSSET Corridor project as a comprehensive infrastructure network, describing it as a bold and visionary initiative with the potential to transform the economic and social landscape of Eastern Africa. Mr. Mame emphasized inclusive, sustainable development, promoting environmental protection, community rights, and equitable growth.

During the discussion, Temesgen Yihunie Alamineh, Deputy Director of the Ethiopian Maritime Authority, highlighted the challenges within the transport and logistics sector in the region. He emphasized the importance of self-sufficiency and efficient logistics to streamline import and export trade processes. Alamineh also underscored the significance of road connectivity from Lamu to Ethiopia and stressed the need to harmonize access load issues and regulatory frameworks.

South Sudan's Minister of Transport, Madut Biar Yel, discussed significant investments in the LAPSSET Corridor during a recent meeting. This includes projects like the Lamu Port, Moyale-Hawassa Road in Kenya, and Nadapal-Turkana Road in South Sudan. Minister Yel also noted progress in resolving border issues with Kenya and plans for collaboration on the Nadapal-Juba Road, along with upcoming projects in mineral exploration, oil and gas development, airports, railways, and waterways.

The newly appointed Cabinet Secretary of the Kenyan Ministry of Transport and Logistics, Mr. Davis Chirchir, acknowledged the achievements of the Kenya Ports Authority, particularly the completion and operationalization of the first three berths. He highlighted projects in the LAPSSET corridor, such as a hydroelectric dam, electric supply, agriculture programs, and broadband connectivity to improve services for people in Africa.

The Governor of Lamu, who now also serves as the Governor for South Sudan and Ethiopia, was commended for his dedication to the development of the corridor. The meeting aimed to expedite the region's and continent's potential by connecting the region and facilitating trade and movement of people. The next Ministerial Council meeting is scheduled to be hosted by Ethiopia.

To sum up what has been said so far, as Ethiopia is landlocked nation with the largest population, the country has been a frontier in regional integration. It is true that the country is always committed to work with the Horn nation for a unified agenda. Ethiopia will use every corridor for its trade and import-export activities, and the LAPSSET is one of them.

# Planet Earth



## Least developed countries need to accelerate adaptation and resilience

BY STAFF REPORTER

A group of experts attending the 46th UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) meeting for Least Developed Countries concluded with a call to accelerate efforts on adaptation and resilience. Held from 19-22 August in Addis Ababa, The Least Developed Countries Expert Group (LEG) lauded the host country, Ethiopia, for its Green Legacy Initiative, which has embedded reforestation and landscape restoration in its climate change and ecosystems protection plan.

The meeting was organized by the UNFCCC secretariat and Ethiopia's Ministry of Planning in partnership with the African Climate Policy Centre of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa.

Established under the UNFCCC in 2001, the primary responsibility of the Experts Group is to assist the least developed countries (LDCs) to address climate change with a focus on effective means of adapting to the adverse impacts of climate change. Top on the agenda of the group's deliberations are ways to assist all the LDCs to have in place their national adaptation plans (NAPs), and pathways to access funding and other support to implement agreed adaptation priorities. Additionally, the group meets to update the technical guidelines for the preparation and implementation of the NAPs based on emerging developments in the global policy landscape, as well as in science, and technology.

Since the process to formulate and implement NAPs was established in 2010, along with the subsequent technical guidance and financial arrangements, only 22 of the 45 LDCs have successfully produced a NAP.

"This lack of progress is concerning, given that all countries are expected to have their NAPs in place by 2025 and to show significant progress in implementation by 2030. The Least Developed Countries Expert Group continues to provide technical guidance and support to the LDCs, which includes the development of guidelines, facilitating access to climate data and information, and facilitating access to necessary funding," said Mr. Gabriel Kpaka, Chair of the LEG.

For his part, Mr. Evans Njewa, Chair of the LDC Group under the UNFCCC said: "The steadfast support provided by the LEG is critical for LDCs to adapt and foster climate change resilience."

The meeting noted that weather and climate extremes, such as floods, droughts, and heatwaves and the scale of their impacts continue to increase across the globe. In July and August 2024, heavy rainfall caused severe flooding and landslides in Southern Ethiopia, an area that was already hit by floods in May 2024, leading to increased loss of life, displacement and damages to livelihoods. And many LDCs are diverting significant proportions of their budgets unplanned to respond to extreme climate events.

Launched in June 2019, the Government of Ethiopia's Green Legacy Initiative has undertaken concrete actions to respond

to the ever-increasing impacts of climate change.

Seyoum Mekonen, Ethiopia's Minister of Planning and Development elaborated on the government's ambitious goal of planting 20 billion seedlings across the country and said by the fourth year, Ethiopia had surpassed this target, planting 25 billion seedlings, thanks to the mobilization of over 20 million citizens nationwide. The meeting learnt that the initiative has also contributed to job creation, with over 767,000 jobs generated, particularly benefiting women and youth. With more than 120,000 nurseries established across the country, the program continues to thrive. In 2023 alone, 5 million indigenous seedlings were planted, and plans are underway to plant an additional 600 million seedlings in 2024.

"The government is ready to collaborate with neighboring countries, sharing its experiences in our very successful Green Legacy Initiative and encouraging the expansion and enhancement of similar climate-resilient programs," said Minister Seyoum Mekonen.

The LDCs face unique and severe challenges in adapting to climate change due to their limited resources, fragile economies, and heightened vulnerability to climate impacts. These nations often lack the financial means, technological capacity, and institutional frameworks necessary to implement effective adaptation strategies, making international and regional support systems critical to their survival and development. Existing support mechanisms, including financial support, technology transfer, and capacity-building initiatives, are

essential but often insufficient, burdened by complex procedures and slow disbursement processes.

To address these gaps, experts stressed that there is an urgent need to revamp the current procedures and modalities, making them more accessible, responsive, and tailored to the specific needs of LDCs. Strengthening these support systems is crucial not only for enabling these countries to cope with climate change but also for ensuring global climate resilience and equity.

"Indeed, efforts are being made to transform the NAPs to attract the necessary financing for implementing adaptation actions by the LDCs, along with transforming how funding is provided to the LDCs, to address the persistent obstacles and challenges they face in accessing financing that is available" said Paul Desanker, UNFCCC secretariat.

"It is important that LDCs are supported with the tools and capacities to build resilience and ensure that investments in key sectors are climate-proofed to deliver in both today's and tomorrow's climate. The UN-wide Opportunities and Issues Based Coalition 4 on fostering climate action and resilience - co-convened by the ECA, UNEP, FAO and UNDP - provides a platform for supporting LDCs with such capacities and tools" said Linus Mofor, Senior Environmental Affairs Officer at the African Climate Policy Centre of the ECA.

The meeting was also attended by the representatives of various organizations, including various UN entities that actively provide or facilitate access to technical and financial support to the LDCs.