

Eng. Habtamu Itefa

Off-grid energy solutions benefit over 580,000 Ethiopians

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

ADDIS ABABA- The implementation of off-grid energy solutions has benefited over 580,000 citizens across the country, said the Ministry of Water and Energy (MoWE).

MoWE Minister Eng. Habtamu Itefa told the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that the country has been working to increase energy supply by integrating renewable sources to meet the growing power demand.

Accordingly, Habtamu's ministry has been expanding off-grid energy technologies especially solar energy, which is proposed to reach remote and rural areas.

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New journey to dispatch career diplomats

BY YESUF ENDRIS

In a landmark decision, the Ethiopian government has appointed 24 senior Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) staff as ambassadors, including ten at the extraordinary and plenipotentiary level. This unprecedented move marks the largest

number of career diplomats ever nominated and appointed from MoFA's head office to Ethiopian embassies and consulates in the country's history.

MoFA State Minister Birtukan Ayano highlighted the significance of this decision, emphasizing that all the new appointees are seasoned diplomats who have demonstrated

excellence in their service. This shift towards prioritizing experience and expertise represents a departure from the previous practice of appointing officials from diverse backgrounds, many with little to no experience in foreign affairs.

Ambassador Nebiyu Tedla, one of the newly

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South Korea doubles support to Ethiopian Korean War veterans

BY GIRMACHEW GASHAW

ADDIS ABABA – South Korea has announced a significant increase in assistance for Ethiopian soldiers and their families who fought to defend the Korean people, doubling the support previously provided.

See South Korea ...page 3

Ethiopia to plant 150 mln trees in day

BY ASHENAFI ANIMUT

ADDIS ABABA - Ethiopia aims to plant over 150 million seedlings in a single day and to break the world record through a person-centered plantation approach, the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) disclosed.

MoA's Natural Resources Development, Conservation, and Utilization Lead Executive Officer Fanose Mekonnen told the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that the country has identified areas using a geo-reference system and made other preliminary preparations to plant 150 million seedlings during this rainy season.

He further stated that the Green Legacy Initiative, supported by the geo-reference system, would significantly showcase Ethiopia's greenery potential and ensure accurate reporting of the number of plants.

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News



Girma Amente (PhD)

Mechanization assembly new investment opportunity: MoA

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

ADDIS ABABA—Since Ethiopia is endeavoring to improve productivity with the expansion of cluster farming, assembling agricultural mechanization locally has become country’s new investment opportunity, Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) announced.

MoA Minister Girma Amente (PhD) told local media that domestic mechanization assembly would open new investment opportunity as the nation’s agriculture sector has seen the ever expanding cluster farming.

Given the fact the Agriculture is one of the main contributors to nation food self-sufficiency goals, several reform activities have been undertaken by the government in which applying cluster farming is amongst them.

The cluster farming allowed farmers with similar agroecology and soil types, technology, and information to produce with same quality. Hence, it increased production capacity on various areas, he said.

During the first implementation phase of cluster farming under the Agriculture Transformation Agency, only 100,000 hectares of land was developed. Last year, the nation developed over 8.6 million hectare land while it implemented cluster farming on 12million hectare land this year, according to the minister.

Cluster farming which comprised about nine million farmers had produced for industry, export and economy using full package. According to survey, he said around five quintal per hectare difference registered between farmers that implement cluster farming.

Nonetheless, the lack of foreign currency, and insufficient provision (quantity and quality) remained a major challenge. Thus, the government has allowed importing equipment that are said to help modernize the agriculture through tax exemption.

Though the nation cultivated some 20million hectare in ‘Meher’ season, only 4 to 5million hectare lands (20%) was developed using Tractor. Thus, he mentioned the plan to produce the mechanization at domestic level.

Enhancing production capacity is the major plan of the coming year. Though the nation has gone long way, comparing with the production of maize and wheat with different countries, much more effort is still needed, Girma said.

Thus, utmost effort would be put to increase fruits, vegetables, animals and cropproduction, as to him.

In Ethiopia, agriculture contributes 76% or 2.9 billion USD to export market and supports job creation, ensure food self-sufficiency.

TVTI receives ISO’s quality mgt system certificate

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

ADDIS ABABA –The Federal Technical and Vocational Training Institute (TVTI) received the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) Quality Management System certificate yesterday for providing quality services.

The certification signals that the institute’s service standard has reached the international level, according to the institute.

TVTI has successfully achieved the certification of the Quality Management System under ISO Standard 9001:2015 for the provision of conducting problem solving research, community service activities, technology, enterprise development and training provision at center, it was learned.

Receiving the certificate Federal TVTI Director General Brook Kedir (PhD) noted that quality management system is one of the specialized reforms the institute has made focusing on quality related issues throughout the entire system to achieve ISO 9001:2015 Quality Management System certification.

According to Brook, Ethiopian Conformity Assessment Enterprise has certified and appreciated TVTI for the great job it has done through implementing a quality management system to new standard in compliance with the requirements of ISO 9001:2015.

The institute has conducted problem solving researches, community service activities, customer satisfaction, enterprise development and training provision of No ECAE/QS10127, he said.

He noted during the first institutional plan, the institute declared the year 2016 as year of excellence and this designation was made to emphasize its commitment to achieve high standards and improve overall performances.



Brook added that the certification is an internationally recognized standard that demonstrates institute’s commitment to quality management practices and this certification is journey towards continuous improvement and transformative excellence.

“This also helps us shaping the institute’s future, and elevates excellence to be competitive in world level in vocational regards.”

Awarding the certification Ethiopian Conformity Assessment Enterprise, Certification Director, Amsalu Enyew said that TVTI has implemented ISO 9001:2015 quality management system for long.

After the auditor observation of two stages of evaluation regarding the institute’s practices, it has become clear that all activities were done in accordance with the new requirements. The auditor assured that the institute is adapting the Quality



Management System to the new standard in good manner and finally ensured all activities successfully done based on the procedures incompliance with the new standard, he said.

Korea commits to continuing humanitarian assistance

• To provide 7 mln USD aid to Ethiopia

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

ADDIS ABABA—The government of the Republic of Korea has decided to provide conflict-affected and vulnerable states of Ethiopia with humanitarian assistance through the international aid agencies, so disclosed embassy of Republic of Korea.

In a press release sent to *The Ethiopian Herald*, the Embassy of the Republic of Korea announced that Republic of Korea has decided to provide conflict affected areas and vulnerable states of Ethiopia in

Ethiopia with 7 million USD through the international agencies aid with humanitarian assistance.

As to the press release, the aid will be addressed by international aid agencies like UNDP as it is ready to provide beneficiaries of DDR (Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration) programs with 3,000,000 USD.

Moreover, under WFP 1,500,000 USD is going to be provided in terms of food aid and nutrition, through ICRC 1,500,000 USD will be provided for emergency medical

relief and under UNICEF 1,000,000 USD is to be provided as relief aid for women and children, and a total of 7 million USD aid is given for Ethiopia.

The Embassy further noted that the Republic of Korea recognizes the urgent humanitarian needs in Ethiopia and will work closely with government of Ethiopian as well as relevant international agencies thereby ensuring the aid through effectively assisting people in need and contributing a lot to restoring peace and stability in Ethiopia in the long run.

News

Authority urges civil societies to increase dev't contributions

BY MESERET BEHAILU

ADDIS ABABA – Authority for Civil Society Organizations (ACSOs) called up on civil society organizations to intensify efforts in fostering national development and prosperity.

The ACSOs has organized the 11th round Federal-Regional Joint Council meeting yesterday in collaboration with states and federal stakeholders and cities administrations aimed at encouraging CSOs' development activities to realize national ambition and holistic prosperity.

In his opening remark, ACSOs Director General Samson Biratu said that civil society organizations have been playing a pivotal role in supporting country's development and prosperity.

According to the Director General, constructing health centers, schools, accessing potable water, and working on economic empowerment are among the CSOs activities

to solve the socioeconomic setbacks.

He further stated that there are over 5,700 CSOs across the country of which 700 of them are international organizations.

According to him, the number of CSOs has been increased by 60% following the national reform though some irresponsible organizations have been shown thereby forcing ACSOs to take corrective measures.

Accordingly, the Director General expressed that some 214 CSOs, which re-registered but did not provide report to the ACSOs and 514 that did not re-register had their licenses revoked.

He stressed that the civil society organizations should give priority to the public interest rather than violating the responsibility given to them.

Addis Ababa Deputy Mayor Jantirar Abay on his part said that CSOs are playing a decisive role in helping the city address social and

economic challenges.

The city administration is working on protecting resident's health, constructing infrastructures, and school feeding with the active involvement of CSOs. Jantirar called up on the CSOs to continue playing their indispensable role in addressing challenges and enforce the government policy and strategy.

Addis Ababa Finance Bureau Head, Abdulkadir Redwan said that some 268 civil society organizations are working with the government for the implementation of policies and strategies including 326 projects in the capital.

Abdulkadir added that about 132,652 citizens have been benefited from social and economic activities conducted under the Bureau's inspection and supervision in the just concluded fiscal year.

CSOs heads from various states and government officials have attended the meeting.

New journey to dispatch career...

appointed diplomats and MoFA spokesperson, noted that this strategic change is expected to yield better outcomes than past practices.

The appointee ambassadors were officially sworn in last Thursday in the presence of President Sahlework Zewde, pledging to uphold national policies in their roles. This appointment is part of broader structural reforms within MoFA aimed at enhancing the proficiency and effectiveness of Ethiopia's diplomatic corps amid increasingly complex global dynamics.

During the diplomats' training week, Foreign Minister Taye Atsekeselassie urged the appointees to innovate and adopt new diplomatic approaches. He emphasized that conventional diplomatic tasks are evolving and encouraged the new ambassadors to

utilize technological tools and pursue creative strategies.

Minister Taye also stressed the importance of national interest and dignity in diplomacy, calling for resilience in the face of pressures and coercion.

The new appointments reflect the government's commitment to building a more capable and specialized diplomatic service, enhancing Ethiopia's global presence and influence. Each diplomat's mission will vary according to Ethiopia's diplomatic relations with different countries.

Ambassador Fisseha Shawel, previously Director General of African Affairs at MoFA, expressed his readiness to strengthen Ethio-India relations, particularly in light of both

countries' membership in BRICS. Similarly, Ambassador Nardos Aylew expected to be assigned to Morocco, plans to bolster economic and tourism relations, aligning with Ethiopia's economic strategies.

Ambassador Lelisa Birhanu, assigned to the United Kingdom, expressed optimism about leveraging existing opportunities to excel in international diplomacy.

The diplomats' training, which concluded in late July, included briefings on the Homegrown Economic Reform from Finance Minister Ahmed Shide and on Diplomatic Protocol and Etiquette from MoFA State Minister Ambassador Birtukan Ayano. Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed also met with the diplomats, according to a MoFA report.

South Korea doubles support to Ethiopian Korean...

In an exclusive interview with *The Ethiopian Herald*, South Korea's Minister of Patriots and Veterans Affairs, KANG Jung-ai, emphasized the Korean government's commitment to recognizing the sacrifices made by Ethiopians during the Korean War. The enhanced support, tailored to the needs and desires of the veterans and their families, is already being implemented.

Minister Kang, during her three-day official visit to Ethiopia, highlighted the strengthened bilateral development cooperation between the two countries, guided by mutual benefit principles and expanding across various development fields.

Kang expressed deep gratitude, noting that Ethiopian veterans sacrificed their lives for Korean families, and reiterated that the support is provided out of love and responsibility. She confirmed that South Korea will continue to enhance its support to Ethiopia across various sectors, underscoring Ethiopia's importance as a friendly country to the former.

Efforts include the establishment of a technical and vocational school in

Ethiopia to help many Ethiopians enhance their professions and skills, and offering opportunities for veterans' children to study in Korea.

Kang emphasized that the sustainable development partnership between the Republic of Korea and Ethiopia is strengthening through people-to-people and cultural ties, ensuring that Korea's efforts will further solidify the relationship.

With a foundation spanning over 60 years, the relationship between Ethiopia and Korea has focused on development partnerships in transport and energy, rural development, health and environmental sanitation, and education.

During her visit, Minister Kang will pay respects at the Ethiopian Korean War Monument and Trinity Church, where Emperor Haile Selassie rests, to honor the historical bonds between Ethiopia and Korea.

She will also host a special luncheon for Korean War veterans and their families in Addis Ababa, where she will present scholarships and honorary funds. The luncheon will feature a performance by the

Kagnew Choir, descendants of the Kagnew Battalion who fought bravely in the Korean War.

Additionally, Minister Kang will visit the MCM Korea Hospital, established with support from Korea, which provides medical care to Ethiopian veterans, including comprehensive check-ups and treatments tailored to their needs.

Minister Kang also met with senior Ethiopian officials responsible for veterans' affairs to strengthen the mutual commitment to veterans' welfare and bilateral cooperation between the two countries.

During her visit, she will also visit the LG-KOICA Hope TVET College to encourage descendants of Korean War veterans currently undergoing training. This institution, established in collaboration between LG Electronics and the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), offers tuition-free training in Electrical Engineering and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to Ethiopian youth, particularly descendants of Korean War veterans.

Ethiopia to...

The plan is to cover approximately 669,000 hectares of land with geo-referencing, and Ethiopia has already managed to plant over one million hectares this year. "Eco-friendly and climate-resistant seedlings are prioritized to boost forestry development," Fanose said. "We have also prepared saplings that beautify and align with metropolis infrastructure standards."

Priorities are given to indigenous seedlings that help conserve soil and water resources, especially in the Abbay River Basin, which accounts for 33% of the total coverage this planting season to protect against sedimentation.

According to the officer, Ethiopia is aggressively working to cover 56% of the plantation with multifaceted fruit saplings and 44% with forest development saplings. Preparations are also made to cover 75 hectares of land with 150 million seedlings in a single day, aiming to break the Guinness World Record.

It is worth mentioning that Ethiopia has envisioned planting 6.5 billion seedlings to reach its goal of 40 billion in the current planting season.

Off-grid energy...

He mentioned that development partners such as the World Bank Group (WBG) and others are ready to support energy sector initiatives in the country. The MoWE also organized sector's structure, trained manpower to exploit solar energy.

Ethiopia is endowed with renewable energy potentials such as water, solar, wind and geothermal energy. So far, over 92% of country's energy production supply comes from hydropower whereas the remaining energy comes from wind and other sources with the capacity to generate over 60, 000 MW of electric power, he added.

"Currently, the emerging energy alternative to outreach the rural and remote areas' growing electricity demand is solar energy." Furthermore, the country has been performing various activities to exploit solar energy potentials, according to the minister.

On the other hand, Habtamu's ministry is undertaking several works to enable a total of 80 million people to have access to potable water at the end of this fiscal year through adding over 5 million new beneficiaries on the 74.6 million people it has already outreached in the just ended fiscal year with drinking water.

Hence, as part of water and sanitary improvement, Clean Ethiopia initiative requires not only raising funds, but also political commitment. It has a great contribution to improve the current situation of water and sanitation service.

Previously water and sanitation sector has been facing various challenges. In this regard, Clean Ethiopia initiative is a focal point to further improve the sanitary situation and create clean environment, he noted.

Opinion

Ambassadors play significant role representing their nation, institution

BY GETACHEW MINAS

Ambassadors play several roles, representing their countries in different friendly countries. They also represent different organizations or brands thereby playing roles depending on the context. They assume general or specific functions on behalf of the country or institution they symbolize. In some cases, they act on behalf of international organizations or business enterprises.

As representatives of business entities, they engage in attracting investment to their country of origin. They may also engage in trading activities that earn foreign exchange for their motherland. In this case, they focus on generating employment for the youth in their country. Those engaged in diplomatic missions also create favorable conditions to exalt the image of the country they represent. They may have double or triple missions in the service of their country. Ethiopian ambassadors that represent business enterprises and those engaged in diplomatic missions have to promote the interests of their country and government.

Diplomatic ambassadors usually act as the official and legal representatives of their country. They engage in diplomatic negotiations on behalf of their home country. In this negotiation, they gather and consult with professional staff to achieve success in their engagements. These diplomatic personnel representing Ethiopia in different forums are highly qualified and experienced in fulfilling their missions. They accumulated experience through serving on diplomatic missions in different countries.

Having knowledge of the history of political, economic and social relations between Ethiopia and other countries are political investments. However, some diplomats have refused to return back to their countries at the completion of their mission. Some of the reasons for leaving their countries for good are political disagreements with the policies of the government and personal offenses. A few of these diplomats may have their own partisan politics that contradict with those of the government.

Initially, diplomats are assigned to promote the goals of their country, including the promotion of economic, cultural, and political interests. These diplomats endeavor to attract resources in support of achieving these goals. They also gather information on political, economic, and social developments in the host country they are assigned to. This effort may help in aligning policies, programs and projects with the host government. This may help in accessing resources for the economic development

of Ethiopia.

These diplomats may be engaged in attracting investment opportunities to their country. They communicate with investors about the economic development plan and opportunities in Ethiopia. These diplomats are also active in protecting the interests of Ethiopians working in the host country. They may provide these citizens' information on their legal entitlements and benefits. The diplomats may also communicate with employers of Ethiopian citizens abroad. Thus, they facilitate and foster positive relationships in the host country.

Qualified diplomats promote diplomatic relations by fostering mutual understanding between countries. The diplomatic quagmire, quandary and predicament of a country begin when an unqualified person is assigned to head a diplomatic mission. The first casualties are the qualified diplomatic staffs that have accumulated relevant experiences on issues that affect their motherland. When faced with an ignoramus or unqualified ambassador bossing them around with petty matters, they are bound to resign or leave their missions. This is worsened when the ambassador begins to associate with junior staffs on unofficial and familial matters.

Through time, such staffs are bound to tarnish the respect and honor of the mission. Some of these staff begins to engage in an informal and illegal trading and black market operations. These staffs compensate their diplomatic ignorance with financial gains in foreign exchange. The head of the mission will, therefore, has to deal with this dilemma of retaining junior and inexperienced staff or relocating or demoting them to non-diplomatic posts, if possible.

Apart from the diplomatic ones, there are economic ambassadors whose duty is to promote the "brand" of products, services, and values to the public. They are located within the different regions of Ethiopia, introducing new products to the domestic markets. They engage with the customers in the neighborhood. These advertisers seek for potential customers to build brand loyalty. Once customers are accustomed to these brands of goods and services, they may find it hard to detach themselves. This creates a market that results in a continuous flow of profit for those who produce and promote products.

Another constant source of income for the business ambassadors is representation by enterprises that produce products. Serving as the representative of the brand is made possible through social media, events, and public appearances. They are also encouraged by feedbacks from customers to the brand. These efforts help in promoting and improving sales of

products and services.

Brand ambassadors create content that associates them with the product or service. The content of the message resonates with the interests of the target audience. Using their influence and network, the sales agents expand the reach and visibility of the brand. The enterprise that owns the brand, engages organizational ambassadors for the purpose of advocacy. Their major duty is to advocate for the "mission, values, and objectives" of the enterprise. They build relationships with stakeholders, including partners and community leaders. These ambassadors have the duty of gathering support through organizational events, campaigns, and initiatives. In this process, they communicate the impact and achievements of the enterprise to the public. These ambassadors may raise funds for assisting efforts for expanding their business networks and influence. In these events, they inform the public about the activities of the enterprise and the products and services it supplies to the market.

As mentioned earlier, the two types of ambassadors are the public servants and private enterprise operators. Though representing different entities, both of them may serve their country with double standards and missions. They may engage in foreign espionage that poses numerous risks and dangers to national security, economic stability, and individual privacy.

Regarding national security risks, both diplomats and businessmen may be assigned by their government to gather intelligence. These agents may gather sensitive information about another country's military capabilities. They also look for espionage strategies and operations that are useful for their country. Espionage may include cyber activities with the objective of hacking into government and defense systems. The public and private operators may search for data breaches and system disruptions. These operators should be assisted by espionage experts at home, within the intelligence office of the government.

Espionage operations seem to be complicated for the layman as they involve advanced scientific acts of sabotage. These acts are conducted against critical infrastructure, such as electric power grids, telecom networks, and transportation systems. Of course, they involve economic risks for countries such as Ethiopia. Foreign espionage may focus on trade secrets and property information. These lead to significant financial losses for state and private enterprises, eliminating comparative and competitive advantages.

Foreign sponsored espionage may have the goal of gaining economic

intelligence. It boosts the capabilities of foreign industries at the expense of the local economy. Espionage activities may lead to manipulation of financial markets using insider information. This causes disruptions of market confidence, diminishing the opportunities of domestic investment. This leads to decline in employment opportunities for the domestic labor force in the country.

Foreign spies may be engaged in influencing operations to manipulate public opinion. They may interfere in the internal affairs of the country during elections. These spies interfere and manipulate political processes in the country. The external spies create espionage incidents that may lead to diplomatic conflicts between countries. They also conduct sabotage, sanctions, retaliations, or even armed conflict.

The espionage activities may include the surveillance of individuals that violate personal privacy, with potential blackmail. These spies target individuals known to have access to valuable information, such as government officials and enterprise managers. These are common targets of espionage that face threats to their safety and security. These officials have to adopt mitigation strategies against espionage using enhanced cyber-security measures to protect sensitive information and data systems.

Scientific effort is need for counterintelligence activities that defend a country. In this respect, strengthening the agencies for counterintelligence operations to detect and neutralize espionage activities against Ethiopia is a primary goal of the government. International cooperation may be solicited whenever requires. It is crucial to collaborate with global partners to share intelligence and combat global espionage threats and dangers. This may be done through legislative and policy measures that enforce laws and regulations to deter espionage activities.

It is crucial to protect national interests for all practical purposes. An overhaul of outdated systems of intelligence is of the essence and crucial. Every step in this direction should be based on scientific studies and approaches for addressing the dangers of foreign espionage. It is absolutely crucial to engage diplomatic and other ambassadors for defending the national security and economic prosperity of Ethiopia.

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

Editorial

Ethiopia: Truly the 'Land of Origins'

The fossil skeleton of the oldest human ancestors, discovered at Hadar, in Ethiopia and named 'Lucy', (also known as Dinknesh) has altered the concept of archeologists and scientists on the history of humankind, created a clear picture of the human species, and stretch the truth where the human species originated.

The discovery of the 3.2 million-year-old *Australopithecus afarensis*, 50 years ago, was a defining moment that changed the perception of archeologists and scientists regarding the evolution of the human story.

The cutting-edge discovery also gave a vivid understanding of human ancestors for the first time- the human species was up and capable of walking upright over three million years ago.

Most of all, the unearthed fossils have made Ethiopia the focus area for the study of human origin (Paleoanthropology study) and bear witness to the fact that Ethiopia is truly the birthplace of humanity- The origin of Mankind.

In actual fact, Ethiopia is the Origin of Mankind. The array of hominid remains ranging from Lucy to a young girl known as Selam, among others, will surely depict the fact that Ethiopia is a country where human life originated. Particularly, the lower Awash and Omo valleys are the epicenter of the cradle of mankind.

In addition, following the discovery of Lucy, at least thirteen more hominin individuals were found at Hadar and dubbed the "First Family." This, coupled with the civilization that goes back thousands of years, the name titled "Ethiopia is Land of Origins" appropriately describes Ethiopia.

Subsequent to being the oldest human ancestor, she has the most complete early human ancestor ever discovered (which comprises 40 percent of her skeleton) that energizes researchers to further their study of human origins and evolution. Indeed, Lucy has become one of the most famous fossils of all time.

The fossil of Lucy was also made travel and exhibited publicly in the United States intending to let the world know Ethiopia's rich history and civilization, to notify that the country is rich in its tangible and intangible heritages, including the remains of Lucy, as well as to testify that Ethiopia is land of human origin and ancient its significance in human origins and its ancient history.

While talking about the importance of the discovery of Lucy in advancing the understanding of human origins, paleontologist Donald Johanson, Founding Director of the Institute of Human Origins, Arizona State University, said, "Lucy sits at a very pivotal point on the family tree. She is a common ancestor to a group of species that all died out; but also an ancestor to the lineage that ultimately led to ourselves."

Currently, the Golden Jubilee of the discovery of Lucy's fossil is being commemorated with various events in Addis Ababa. The celebration of the Anniversary will run until November, and marking the day has more importance in building the image of the country at a global level and promoting the country's tourism resources.

Essentially, the discovery of a 3.2-million-year-old *Australopithecus afarensis* in Ethiopia reveals not only the country's long history and civilization but also its status as the origin of humankind. Moreover, it represents a significant scientific achievement in exploring human evolution. Therefore, marking the 50th anniversary of Lucy's fossil discovery holds international significance alongside its national importance.



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The Ethiopian Herald

Opinion

The right time for power grid integration among East African states

BY GIRMACHEW GASHAW

the region.

For want of creating economic integration among the east African countries, Ethiopia is now building huge hydroelectric dams with a vision of generating huge amount of electric power for the use of itself and other African countries as well. This helps horn countries to ensure economic integration by promoting regional cooperation and collaboration to enhance economic development, trade, and investment opportunities.

Despite challenges such as political instability, security concerns, and infrastructure deficiencies, there is potential for increased commerce, investment, and regional growth through IGAD.

Efforts to enhance economic integration in the Horn of Africa include the construction of transportation infrastructure, trade facilitation measures, and the promotion of regional economic policies by these countries. These efforts aim to create a more connected and successful economic environment in the region. However, all of these efforts would be futile without a reliable source of energy.

Considering these factors, Ethiopia, one of the largest and most populous countries in the Horn of Africa, plays a significant role in economic integration in the region by sharing electricity with neighboring countries. Ethiopia's economic policies and actions also have a substantial impact on regional economic dynamics.

Specifically, the government has focused on securing energy cooperation. Ethiopia's vast hydropower potential makes it a key provider of electricity to surrounding countries. Ethiopia aims to provide electricity to the region through projects like the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, while also promoting economic integration through shared resources. It is crucial to consider why energy supply is so vital in the Horn region.

Ethiopia's contribution to energy cooperation is a critical aspect of strengthening economic integration in the Horn of Africa. The country's abundant hydropower resources and ambitious energy projects have the potential to transform the regional energy landscape and contribute to greater economic integration.

For example, a report from the Ethiopian Electric Power (EEP) shows that Ethiopia earned 47.5 million USD in the first half of the fiscal year by supplying power to neighboring countries. EEP plans to export 1.82 gig watt hours of power to Djibouti, Sudan, and Kenya for a total of 66.27 million US dollars. This demonstrates how Ethiopia's efforts to provide energy benefit

Besides, Ethiopia's energy supply is also vital in the Horn region since Ethiopia can play a role of balance for the region by ensuring electric power system interconnection with neighboring countries.

There is a huge commitment from Ethiopia to the renewable energy sector. Ethiopia has enormous renewable energy potential, mostly hydroelectric. If you look at the country's electricity mix, hydropower accounts for more than 90 percent. So Ethiopia has the potential to play a significant role in maintaining regional equilibrium.

Besides, the country has already been implementing interconnection with neighboring countries like Sudan, Kenya, and Djibouti. So, through Ethiopia, they will balance the intermittence of renewable energy-based power that will come from other countries. Hence, Ethiopia has indeed been playing a leading role in creating energy ties with neighboring countries as the country is successfully supplying energy to its neighboring countries of Sudan, Djibouti, and Kenya.

This is a crucial aspect for mutual growth and economic integration since Ethiopia's national energy goals are aligned with Africa and global energy cooperation. The government is operating in accordance with African energy frameworks that assure both relevance and long-term sustainability. Because Ethiopia's initiatives to supply energy to neighboring countries will promote economic cooperation and develop connections with them.

Furthermore, Ethiopia's energy supply is crucial in the Horn region as it can act as a balancing factor by establishing electric power system connections with neighboring countries. The country has already implemented interconnections with Sudan, Kenya, and Djibouti, showing its commitment to regional energy cooperation.

Ethiopia's initiatives are essential in ensuring regional energy security and promoting economic growth through energy cooperation. By exporting power and creating jobs, Ethiopia can benefit economically while providing cheap and reliable energy to neighboring countries to support their industrial and economic development.

In conclusion, Ethiopia's efforts to promote energy cooperation are highly beneficial to the region. By ensuring electric power system connections with neighboring countries, Ethiopia can promote regional balance and advance economic integration in the Horn of Africa, leading to greater energy security, infrastructural development, and economic growth.

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

Business & Economy

Towards uplifting African economy

BY ABEBE WOLDEGIORGIS

Africa has abundant natural resources including arable land, water sources, and mines. It is also one of the populous continents in the world with more than 1.2 billion people. Africa's main stay of the economy is agriculture, and it is rain fed and vulnerable to climate change and global warming.

Nevertheless, due to shortage of finance, technology and well trained man power, the continent remains as the pauperized continent in the world. According to the World Bank report, Africa contributes only 3% of the world export share and its 40% of food demand is covered by importation and aid. Africa's export commodities are mainly unprocessed raw materials which are extracted from agriculture and mining.

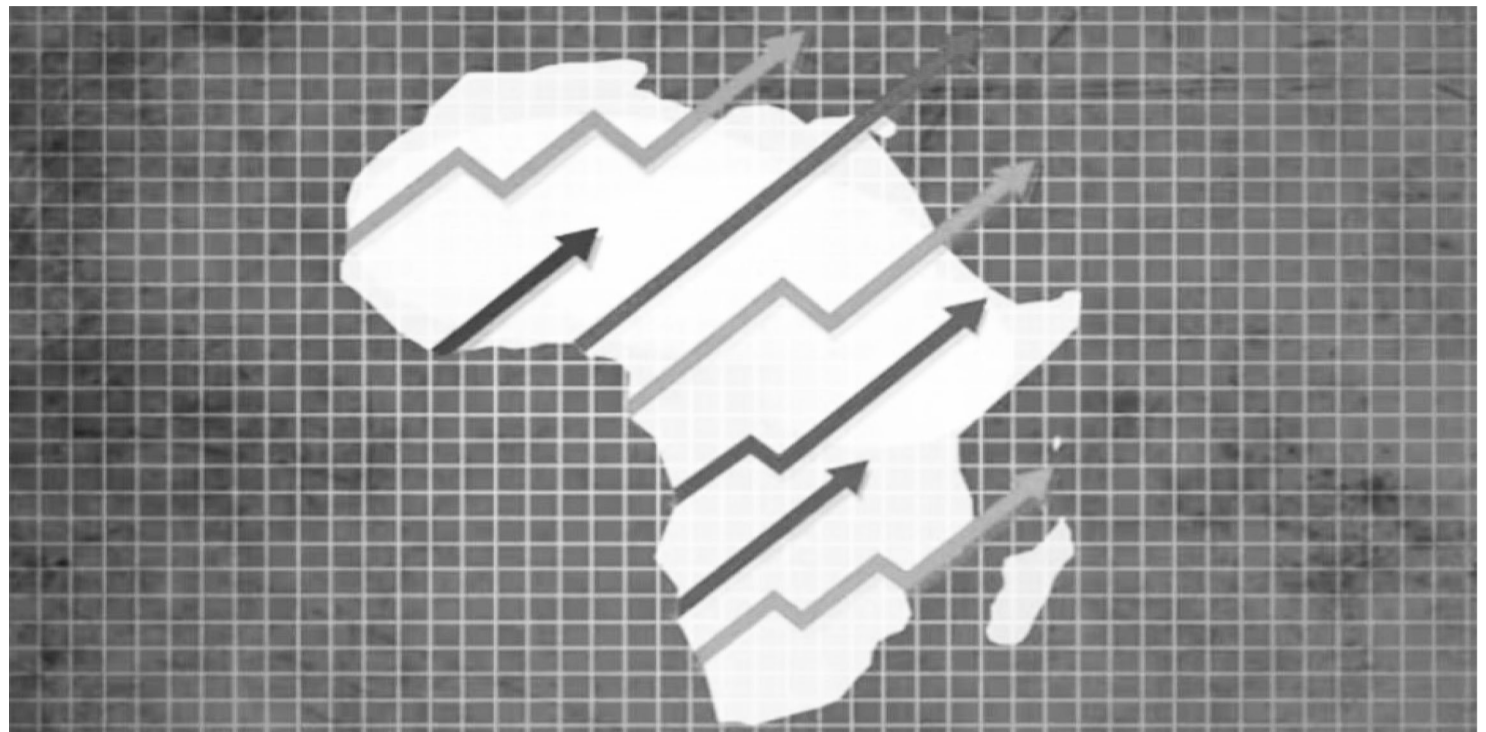
The political instability rampant in the last half century left many countries to experience political upheaval, revolution, civil war and violence, which in turn hampered the continent's economic development. Though the continent's image is overshadowed by poverty and political instability, some countries' economic performance is encouraging. Some countries relatively secured peace and political stability, could resist external challenges and stabilized their economy and registered remarkable progress. They also developed confidence to attain some of the sustainable development goals.

The ongoing infrastructural developments such as roads, railways, energy and export boost enabled the countries to withstand external economic shakes and attract foreign investment.

Professor Alemayehu Geda is Senior Economic Researcher and Instructor at Addis Ababa University. As he underlined, many African economies are better placed to cope with harsh external conditions than they were in the past two decades. Global conditions have eased slightly since mid2016, improving the outlook for Africa, but countries in the continent still face major macroeconomic challenges.

He further explained that, commodity prices are recovered, but it is not to pre-crisis levels, and demand for traditional and nontraditional exports from Africa remains modest. Regarding the exchange of money, though the current account positions have improved, they are not sufficiently robust; Dollar interest rates are expected to edge up and bidding up the cost of capital. Besides this external debt ratios have begun to rise across the continent.

Infrastructure investment in the continent is largely financed by external borrowing. Therefore, it needs careful monitoring to ensure that revenue streams (generated in local currencies) are strong enough to meet the debt obligations when they fall due. Fiscal policy should not undercut the growth-promoting effects of the recent surge in public investment and reverse the inroads made in poverty reduction, health, and education across the continent. In short, macroeconomic policy must blend the real exchange rate, flexibility and legal



Africa is projected to maintain its status as the second fastest-growing continent globally

framework.

Recently, a new joint report by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), the African Development Bank (AfDB), and the African Union Commission (AUC) has found that Africa is off track to meet the majority of its sustainable development targets in 2030.

The 2024 African Sustainable Development Report (ASDR), titled "Reinforcing the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 and Eradicating Poverty in Times of Multiple Crises: The Effective Delivery of Sustainable, Resilient and Innovative Solutions," was presented recently at an event on the margins of the UN High-Level Political Forum for Sustainable Development in New York.

The report's key findings highlight the critical importance of scaled-up development financing to help African countries get back on track and accelerate progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the African Union's Agenda 2063.

"Advanced economies have rebounded from COVID-19, but many countries in Africa struggle with high debt, double-digit inflation, and limited access to crucial development and climate funding," Claver Gatete, UNECA Executive Secretary said.

He added that disparities in the Human Development Index are widening between top-ranking nations and those at the bottom, highlighting significant challenges across Africa despite some progress in recent decades.

The research shows that Africa is on track to reach only less than three of the 32 SDG targets assessed in the report, while setbacks have been recorded for 8 targets, and slow progress or status quo registered for the remaining targets.

Matthias Naab, UNDP Africa Deputy Regional Director stressed the urgency of the situation, stating: "African countries have made some significant progress in important areas, but we are running out of time. It is imperative we reinforce partnerships and look at innovative solutions to stop the current deceleration - and even reversal in some areas - and work more closely with

African countries and people to get back on track towards our Global Goals and the Africa We Want."

The report highlighted several key areas of concern, including Official Development Assistance (ODA) to Africa increased by only 2 % in 2023, with the total ODA remaining well below the 0.7 % of donors' combined Gross National Income target.

According to the report, Africa needs between 118.2 billion USD and 145.5 billion USD per year to implement its climate action commitments and Nationally Determined Contributions, but only 29.5 billion USD has been mobilized so far. Poverty reduction efforts have been set back by crises like COVID-19, with Africa now accounting for more than half (54.8%) of people living in poverty worldwide, as stated by the report.

Progress on combating hunger and undernourishment remains a major challenge, with the number of hungry people in Africa rising to 281.6 million in 2022.

The ASDR called for urgent action to address these threats, including strengthening partnerships, leveraging innovative financing solutions, and enhancing domestic resource mobilization through reforms such as digitizing tax administration and implementing progressive taxation. Financing remains a challenge for Africa, said Al Hamndou Dorsouma, Manager of the AfDB Climate Change and Green Growth Division.

"This requires the development partners to scale up their support by strengthening the system of public development banks focusing on enhancing productive capacities, infrastructure, and human capital development and for African countries to prioritize domestic resource mobilization," he said. The report also highlighted the critical need to improve data collection and monitoring capacities across the continent to better track progress and inform policymaking.

"This new report underscores African countries' commitment and progress, but it also highlights the challenges that

remain for us to shape up 'The Africa We Want'," Monique Nsanzabaganwa, Deputy Chairperson of the African Union said.

He stressed the urgent need to accelerate sustainable development actions and the imperative for African countries to step up their efforts and empower communities for a more inclusive growth.

For decades, African countries crafted their economic policies to meet their aspirations. But, due to insufficient finance drawn from local sources, they resorted to borrow money from international financial institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. But, due to inefficient management and corruption, some of the development projects supported by donor institutions remained incomplete, which in turn incurred additional costs for the accomplishment of the projects. These again hinder countries' efforts to reduce poverty.

Reflecting his view on Africa's debt crisis, Professor Alemayehu said that the continent exports raw materials and imports industrial and capital goods, which are more expensive than its exports. As a result, Africa imports 20% fold than it exports, and this makes Africa to remain as the most indebted continent in the world. He further expressed that, in addition to the debt crisis, the continent lost a huge amount of wealth because of illegal trade worth 50 billion Dollars annually.

According to his justification, in order to enhance their debt service capacity, African countries usually resort to negotiating with loan-provider international institutions. But the criterion put by lender institutions are unmet by borrower countries. Mostly, borrower countries were required to lower their currency exchange rate against the Dollar which again pushed the countries to suffer from inflation and unemployment.

To bring remedy to the crises, as to Prof. Alemayehu, Africa should transform its export commodities from the raw form into the finished goods through value addition. Moreover, to curb illegal trade it has to root out corruption through establishing strong and independent institutions.

Art & Culture

Your readings of the best African Novel in this Rainy Season

BY MULUGETA GUDETA

In most countries, summer is chosen as a time to read books published regularly to meet the season's market demands. Why is summer preferred to promote reading and publishing? It is a season full of light and sunshine, a time of going out, entertainment, and joy as people come out of the terrible wintertime in Western countries in particular. Here in Africa, we don't have seasonal reading times and seasonal literary activities. We don't have literary events particularly designed for the seasons. Africa is either sunshine or rainfall. No snowfall, no long and dark winters. And there is no need to celebrate summer readings because there is no summer season in Africa.

But we can try to invent something akin to 'summer readings' by using the rainy season in Ethiopia for instance, to promote readings of selected books from Africa. Given the fact that African literature largely remains unknown in many African countries including Ethiopia, it would not be out of place to promote African writing at a particular time of the year.

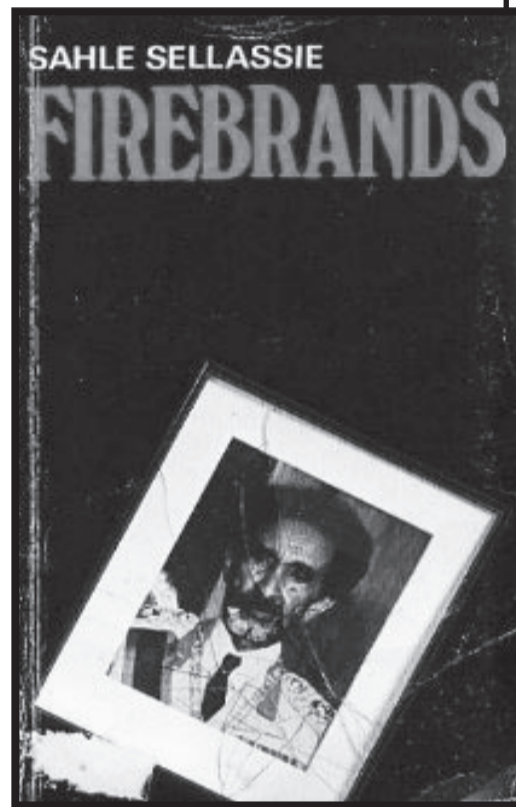
To start with, this columnist has selected a series of novels selected by critics' and publishers as contemporary best African novels worthy of reading at this time or at any time. Their selection is based on critical reviews, their publishing success, and their acceptance by the reading public worldwide. These are not novels that are confined to the continent. They are rather international bestsellers. These selections are not only enjoyable to read but also sources of imagination and inspiration for people who live inside and outside Africa.

Ethiopian readers hardly turn to African writers of African novels or any other book in any other genre. The reasons are clear. Most, if not all, books and novels in Africa are written either in English or French or in the local languages that are not accessible to Ethiopian readers. A few isolated attempts have been made in the past to translate some of the best African novels into Amharic. One of them is "Things Fall Apart" by Chinua Achebe. Yet, most African writing remains out of reach of readers in Ethiopia. This is also the legacy of colonialism that has developed vertical relationships between African writing and the colonial educational system that confined African writers to Western influences, while horizontal relationships among the African elites have always remained largely absent. African readers and African writers should therefore break this old paradigm and come closer to celebrating African culture and African writing.

Below are some of the most celebrated African novels by emerging writers who are presently shining not only within the continent but also globally. The following best African novels are recommended by Blessing Musariri, who is herself a writer. She has penned what is considered one of the best African novels entitled "This Once, Are You Immaculate"

Read

Musariri says the following in an interview: "We are connected to the spirit, and it is an active connection. It is not somewhere that is only in the afterlife, it is here in the present as

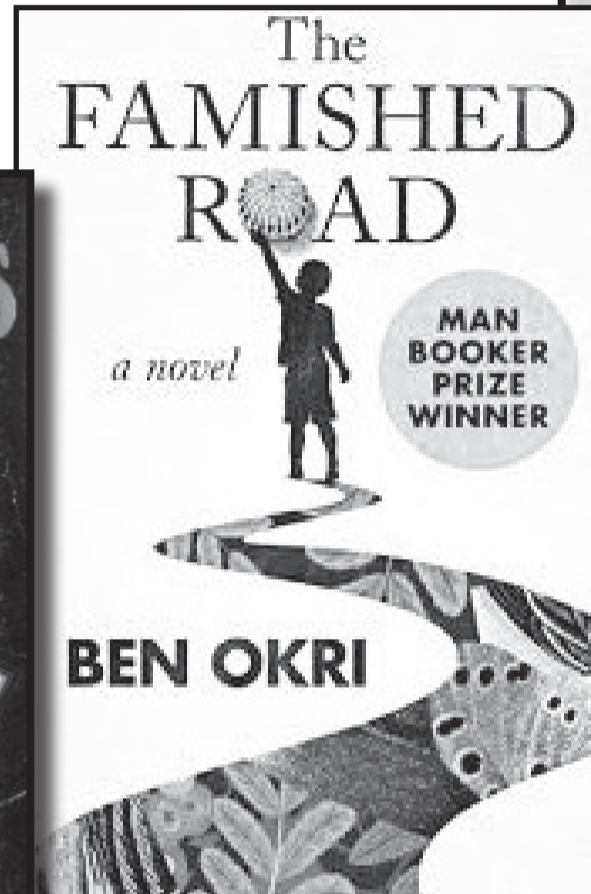


well. That, I think, is endemic across all African cultures and traditions," says Zimbabwean novelist and poet Blessing Musariri. Here she recommends some of the best African novels, books that had a big personal impact and have stayed with her. Musariri has written the following words in her introduction to her best African novel selection. This columnist has brought it here in full because it is an objective assessment of the best books and best novels in Africa.

Musariri is talking about African novels Sub-Saharan Africa, to be more specific. Before we talk about the books individually and why you chose them, can you tell me a bit about African novels in general?

I only started reading African novels when I went to university, from the age of about 18 upwards. That is when I started realizing that I should probably try and read more African books because our school system here in Zimbabwe is very British. We studied Chaucer, Shakespeare, and Dickens, so I grew up knowing those authors: they were the mainstream, the classics you needed to have read.

We had the African classics—Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Chinua Achebe—but we had not been taught them at the school that I went to, so I wasn't exposed to them. It was quite an awakening for me when I started getting into the literary scene, which wasn't until maybe my late 20s that I felt so ignorant of literature from Africa. And I think there's a certain stage where, if you don't read certain books at school, it becomes a mission that you have to read them. It is not necessarily out of pleasure anymore, but out of a sense of obligation: "How can I be in this space without knowing these writers and their stories—our stories?" You start to realize, "Gosh, I've grown up with a completely one-sided mindset about my continent, the place where I come from."



The only writer of note I did know growing up was Tsitsi Dangarembga. I had read *Nervous Conditions* in my teens because I'd heard a lot about it. It was one of the books that made it into the mainstream very early on. She was the first Zimbabwean woman published in English and it came out around the time I was reading independently and starting to widen my horizon. The book was a big deal.

Now there is so much to read that I have to read very purposefully. I don't think, "Oh, this is an interesting book. Why don't I pick it up?" I think, "I now must read this book. Everybody's talking about this writer. I must also read about this writer and stay up-to-date. But it's a huge undertaking, especially now because African writing has become quite mainstream. Before, it wasn't, it was quite a specialist thing."

When I think of the time *The Famished Road* came out, Ben Okri's novel was a big book out of Africa. I'm sure other people who were already in the world of African literature would have different viewpoints but, for me, that was my first book. It opened my mind up to what was possible with African literature in the mainstream, and I think that's probably why I picked it as one of the best books.

Musariri is particularly fond of Ben Okri's "The Famished Road". Below, she reflects on the merit of the book and its significance in African or Nigerian culture and tradition.

I read *The Famished Road*, and it felt like a reality I understand, about the spirit child moving in and out of the world. I gather that in Nigeria these spirit children are known as *abiku*, they're the souls of children who have died before reaching maturity. Do you think you need to understand local folklore to appreciate the novel?

I don't think you need to at all. It's a story. You just have to be open to believing the story, or



not even believing it, just being able to appreciate it, to find something in it that appeals to you—even if it's just the language or the cadence of the words. Whatever it is, so long as you find something in that story that works for you, you don't have to know everything. I don't know everything about every novel that I

read. Some novels will obviously hit differently than others, based on your own personal experiences and your mindset.

Also, presumably traditional beliefs vary a lot across Africa: in Nigeria they aren't the same traditions as in Zimbabwe.

No, they're not. It's just the simple principle that we are connected to the spirit and it's an active connection. It's not somewhere that's only in the afterlife it's here in the present as well. That, I think, is endemic across all African cultures and traditions.

Ethiopia too has prominent writers who mostly write in their mother tongue and have not been able to make any impact on the global and African literary scene. True, some of them have written remarkable books in English. We can mention for instance Sahele Selassie Birhane Mariam who wrote *Fire Brands* and *Warrior King*, Abe Gubegna who wrote and published the "Savage Girl" and other works in Amharic. Although Abe's works were excellent for a writer who works in his second language, they were not however strong enough to attract international attention. Dagnachew Worku, author of "The Thirteenth Sun" was perhaps the first Ethiopian writer whose work was published by Heinemann Publishing. Heinemann Publishing also published Sahele Selassie's works.

There are also contemporary writers both here at home and in the Diaspora who have published remarkable novels that have even splashed on the international literary scene. Meseret Mengiste who was shortlisted for the British-based Booker Prize, Dinaw Mengistu who won literary prizes in the United States where he studied and still lives. These are two of the prominent Ethiopian writers who have shown promise of great works to come. None of them however attained the status of Chinua Achebe or Ngugi wa Thiong'o. It is a pity to realize that no Ethiopian writer has so far produced something that could rank as "the best novel of Africa".

Global Affairs

79 years after Hiroshima, Nagasaki: A grim reminder of nuclear annihilation

The upcoming 79th anniversary of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, which took place on August 6 and 9, 1945, remains a grim reminder of the destructive consequences of nuclear weapons.

The US bombings killed an estimated 90,000 to 210,000, with roughly half of the deaths occurring on the first day in Hiroshima.

But despite an intense global campaign for nuclear disarmament, the world has witnessed an increase in the number of nuclear powers from five—the US, UK, France, China and Russia—to nine, including India, Pakistan, North Korea and Israel.

Is the continued worldwide anti-nuclear campaign an exercise in futility? And will the rising trend continue—with countries such as Iran, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and South Korea—as potential nuclear powers of the future?

South Africa is the only country that has voluntarily given up nuclear weapons after developing them. In the 1980s, South Africa produced six nuclear weapons, but dismantled them between 1989 and 1993. A number of factors may have influenced South Africa's decision, including national security, international relations, and a desire to avoid becoming a pariah state.

But there is an equally valid argument that there have been no nuclear wars—only threats—largely because of the success of the world-wide anti-nuclear campaign, the role of the United Nations and the collective action by most of the 193 member states in adopting several anti-nuclear treaties.

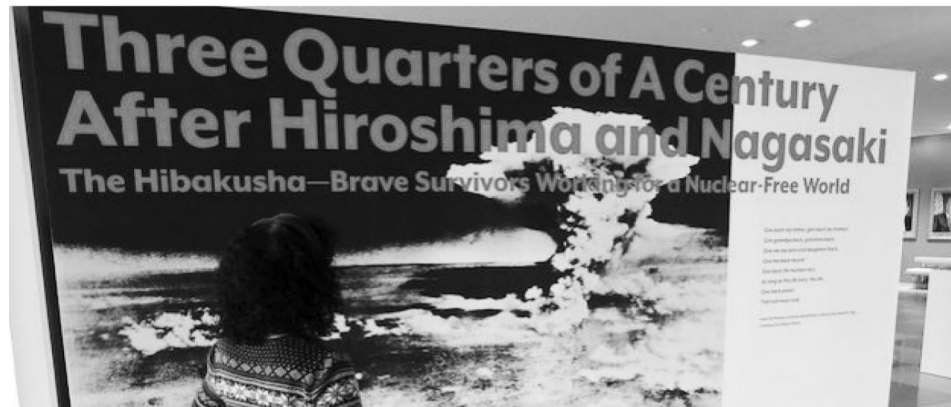
According to the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA), the United Nations has sought to eliminate weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) ever since the establishment of the world body. The first resolution adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1946 established a commission to deal with problems related to the discovery of atomic energy, among others. The commission was to make proposals for, inter alia, the control of atomic energy to the extent necessary to ensure its use only for peaceful purposes.

Several multilateral treaties have since been established with the aim of preventing nuclear proliferation and testing, while promoting progress in nuclear disarmament.

These include the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and Under Water, also known as the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), which was signed in 1996 but has yet to enter into force, and the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW).

Jackie Cabasso, Executive Director, Western States Legal Foundation in Oakland, California, which monitors and analyzes US nuclear weapons programs and policies, told IPS: “As we approach the 79th anniversary of the U.S. atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the world is facing a greater danger of nuclear war than at any time since 1945.”

“The terrifying doctrine of ‘nuclear deterrence,’ which should long ago have been delegitimized and relegated to the dustbin of history and replaced with multilateral, non-militarized common security, has metastasized



Erico Platt looks at the disarmament exhibition that she staged, “Three Quarters of a Century after Hiroshima and Nagasaki: The Hibakusha—Brave Survivors Working for a Nuclear-Free World.”

into a pathological ideology brandished by nuclear-armed states and their allies to justify the perpetual possession and threatened use—including first use—of nuclear weapons,” she pointed out.

“It is more important than ever that we heed the warnings of the aging *hibakusha* (A-bomb survivors): What happened to us must never be allowed to happen to anyone again; nuclear weapons and human beings cannot co-exist; no more Hiroshimas, no more Nagasakis!”

This demands an irreversible process of nuclear disarmament. But to the contrary, all nuclear armed states are qualitatively and, in some cases, quantitatively upgrading their nuclear arsenals and a new multipolar arms race is underway, she noted.

“To achieve the elimination of nuclear weapons and a global society that is more fair, peaceful, and ecologically sustainable, we will need to move from the irrational fear-based ideology of deterrence to the rational fear of an eventual nuclear weapon use, whether by accident, miscalculation, or design.”

“We will also need to stimulate a rational hope that security can be redefined in humanitarian and ecologically sustainable terms that will lead to the elimination of nuclear weapons and dramatic demilitarization, freeing up tremendous resources desperately needed to address universal human needs and protect the environment.”

In this time of multiple global crises, “our work for the elimination of nuclear weapons must take place in a much broader framework, taking into account the interface between nuclear and conventional weapons and militarism in general, the humanitarian and long-term environmental consequences of nuclear war, and the fundamental incompatibility of nuclear weapons with democracy, the rule of law, and human wellbeing,” declared Cabasso.

Dr. M.V. Ramana, Professor and Simons Chair in Disarmament, Global and Human Security School of Public Policy and Global Affairs and Graduate Program Director, MPPGA at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, told IPS, “The glass is half-full or half-empty depending on how one looks at it.”

“The fact that we have avoided nuclear war since 1945 is also partly due to the persistence of the anti-nuclear movement. Historians like Lawrence Wittner have pointed to the many instances when governments have chosen nuclear restraint instead of unrestrained expansion.”

While South Africa is the only country that dismantled its entire nuclear weapons program, many countries—Sweden, for example—have

chosen not to develop nuclear weapons even though they had the technical capacity to do so. They did so in part because of strong public opposition to nuclear weapons, which in turn is due to social movements supporting nuclear disarmament, he pointed out.

Thus, organizing for nuclear disarmament is not futile. Especially as we move into another era of conflicts between major powers, such movements will be critical to our survival, declared Ramana.

According to the UN, groups of elderly *hibakusha*, called *Nihon Hidankyo*, have dedicated their lives to achieving a non-proliferation treaty, which they hope will ultimately lead to a total ban on nuclear weapons.

“On an overcrowded train on the Hakushima line, I fainted for a while, holding in my arms my eldest daughter of one year and six months. I regained my senses at her cries and found no one else was on the train,” a 34-year-old woman testifies in the booklet. She was located just two kilometres from the Hiroshima epicenter.

Fleeing to her relatives in Hesaka, at age 24, another woman remembers that “people, with the skin dangling down, were stumbling along. They fell down with a thud and died one after another,” adding, “still now I often have nightmares about this, and people say, ‘it’s neurosis’.”

One man who entered Hiroshima after the bomb recalled in the exhibition “that dreadful scene—I cannot forget even after many decades.”

At a disarmament exhibition in UN Headquarters in New York, a visitor reads text about a young boy bringing his little brother to a cremation site in Nagasaki, Japan. Credit: UNODA/Erico Platt

A woman who was 25 years old at the time said, “When I went outside, it was dark as night. Then it got brighter and brighter, and I could see burnt people crying and running about in utter confusion. It was hell...I found my neighbor trapped under a fallen concrete wall... Only half of his face was showing. He was burned alive”.

The steadfast conviction of the *Hidankyo* remains: “Nuclear weapons are absolute evil that cannot coexist with humans. There is no choice but to abolish them.”

Addressing the UN Security Council last March, Secretary-General Antonio Guterres warned that with geopolitical tensions escalating the risk of nuclear warfare to its highest point in decades, reducing and abolishing nuclear weapons is the only viable

path to saving humanity.

“There is one path—and one path only—that will vanquish this senseless and suicidal shadow once and for all. We need disarmament now,” he said, urging nuclear-weapon States to re-engage to prevent any use of a nuclear weapon, re-affirm moratoria on nuclear testing and “urgently agree that none of them will be the first to use nuclear weapons.”

He called for reductions in the number of nuclear weapons led by the holders of the largest arsenals—the United States and the Russian Federation—to “find a way back to the negotiating table” to fully implement the New Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms, or START Treaty, and agree on its successor.

“When each country pursues its own security without regard for others, we create global insecurity that threatens us all,” he observed. Almost eight decades after the incineration of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, nuclear weapons still represent a clear danger to global peace and security, growing in power, range and stealth.”

“States possessing them are absent from the negotiating table, and some statements have raised the prospect of unleashing nuclear hell—threats that we must all denounce with clarity and force,” he said. Moreover, emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence and cyber and outer space domains have created new risks.”

From Pope Francis, who calls the possession of nuclear arms “immoral”, to the *hibakusha*, the brave survivors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, to Hollywood, where *Oppenheimer* brought the harsh reality of nuclear doomsday to vivid life for millions around the world, people are calling for an end to the nuclear madness. “Humanity cannot survive a sequel to *Oppenheimer*,” he warned.

When Nagasaki marked the 78th anniversary of the U.S. atomic bombing of the city last year, the mayor Shiro Suzuki, urged world powers to abolish nuclear weapons, saying nuclear deterrence also increases risks of nuclear war, according to an Associated Press (AP) report.

He called on the Group of Seven (G7) industrial powers to adopt a separate document on nuclear disarmament that called for using nuclear weapons as deterrence.

“Now is the time to show courage and make the decision to break free from dependence on nuclear deterrence,” Suzuki said in his peace declaration. “As long as states are dependent on nuclear deterrence, we cannot realize a world without nuclear weapons.”

Russia’s nuclear threat has encouraged other nuclear states to accelerate their dependence on nuclear weapons or enhance capabilities, further increasing the risk of nuclear war, and that Russia is not the only one representing the risk of nuclear deterrence, Suzuki said.

Suzuki, whose parents were *hibakusha*, or survivors of the Nagasaki attack, said knowing the reality of the atomic bombings is the starting point for achieving a world without nuclear weapons. He said the survivors’ testimonies are a true deterrent against nuclear weapons use, the AP report said.

(SOURCE: INTER PRESS SERVICE)

Law & Politics

“Ethiopia’s move to a market-based determination of the exchange rate is a key element of reform program,”

Tobias Rasmussen, IMF Resident Representative in Ethiopia

BY DANIEL ALEMAYEHU

The recent measure the government of Ethiopia took as part of its macro-economic reform has been received with cheers and jeers. The floating exchange rate the country has introduced lately is yet to be fully felt in the economy as economists weigh in on the opportunities and threats of such a grand move.

And, years ago, the country also introduced a homegrown economic program. To finance the program, the country has knocked on the door of creditors.

This week, after negotiations with international financial institutions, the country has decided to implement a market-based determination of the exchange rate. Following the measure, the country has reportedly secured some 10.7 billion USD from various loan providers. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has also agreed to provide a total amount of 3.4 billion USD to the economic shift that Ethiopia plans to implement.

On the heels of the big move, *The Ethiopian Herald* has had an exclusive interview via email with Tobias Rasmussen, the monetary organization’s Resident Representative in Ethiopia where he talked about recent economic and financial issues. The full interview follows.

The Ethiopian Herald: We are in the wake of Ethiopia’s big economic shift as the country introduced a market-based exchange rate. How do you see this move? What sort of positive and negative impact the measure would bring to Ethiopia’s economy? Some experts forecast economic shock, even market instability due to the new measure. How will the fund work with the country to curtail such threats?

Tobias Rasmussen: Ethiopia has embarked on a historic reform program that is set to transform the economy. The authorities’ determination and commitment to moving the economy in the right direction and to improve economic outcomes for people is impressive.

Anchored on their updated Homegrown Economic Reform (HGER2.0) plan, the reforms aim to stimulate strong and inclusive private sector-led growth and job creation. The move to a market-based determination of the exchange rate is a key element of Ethiopia’s reform program. It will alleviate the acute shortages of foreign exchange that previously existed, and it will promote export and investment activity.

Ethiopia’s reform program is backed by an IMF Extended Credit Facility (ECF) that was approved by the IMF Board on July 29. It is a four-year arrangement, which provides financing of US\$ 3.4 billion of which about US\$ 1 billion was disbursed immediately after Board approval.

The remaining funding will be disbursed



after periodic reviews that will assess performance relative to program targets. Financing under the ECF is provided with a low (currently zero) interest rate under the Poverty Reduction and Growth Trust.

Alongside the IMF, support for Ethiopia’s reform program is also being provided, in roughly equal magnitude, by the World Bank in the form of budget support and from external creditors in the form of debt relief. In total, the financing package amounts to US\$10.7 billion.

The reforms that are underway are extensive and will inevitably imply changes for the Ethiopian population. Over time, as the reforms take hold, people will benefit from increased economic activity and increased scope for public spending in priority areas. In the near term, the change in the exchange rate regime may lead to some imported commodities becoming more expensive. So, an important element of the authorities’ reform agenda is that it also includes measures to mitigate these impacts.

In particular, the program includes a spending package of about 1½ percent of GDP this fiscal year, which will pay for increases in coverage and benefits under existing social safety net programs and temporary subsidies for key products such as fuel and fertilizer. The increases in spending on the social safety net will be permanent.

The Ethiopian Herald: Borrowers, especially developing nations, have been facing debt burden. What is the bank doing to help the countries withstand the challenges? How does the institution consider the debt-paying time and interest for developing countries based on their situation? What are the considerable situations for those nations to get some relief period?

Tobias Rasmussen: Many countries have been struggling with high and growing debt burdens. These challenges have become

more acute following the succession of shocks in recent years, especially the COVID-19 pandemic among other issues.

The IMF responded with a marked scaling up of financial support, providing emergency financing of over US\$170 billion to 90 countries from March 2020 through March 2022. The level of financial support has remained high, especially for sub-Saharan Africa, where more than half the countries are currently benefiting from IMF financing, including around \$6 billion distributed in 2023 alone. With its new ECF arrangement, Ethiopia is now one of the major beneficiaries.

The IMF has also been actively supporting a series of initiatives to provide debt relief to countries in a coordinated manner. This included the Debt Service Suspension Initiative initiated in 2020, under which some 50 low-income countries with, or requesting, an IMF-supported program received over \$10 billion in debt relief from G20 creditors in the aftermath of the pandemic.

The IMF has also played a supportive role in the development of the G20 Common Framework to provide debt treatment for low-income countries in debt distress. Ethiopia is one of the countries benefitting from the Common Framework, with creditors having already provided a debt service suspension in November 2023, and committed to providing a more comprehensive debt treatment consistent with Ethiopia’s new ECF arrangement.

The Ethiopian Herald: According to critics, the institution is being used by its financiers to impose political ideologies, cultural values, and interests on borrowing nations. What is your response to such allegations? How does the institution in order to follow up and regulate whether the finance is used for the intended purpose?

Tobias Rasmussen: The IMF works to achieve sustainable growth and prosperity for all its 190 member countries. It does so by supporting economic policies that promote financial stability and monetary cooperation, which are essential to increase productivity, job creation, and economic well-being. This includes financial support to countries facing balance of payments pressures, to create breathing room as they implement policies that restore economic stability and growth. IMF-supported programs are structured with periodic reviews of compliance with program objectives and targets, allowing for continued dialogue with country authorities and adjustments as needed.

Domestic ownership of the policy agenda is critical, especially for the lasting success of reform efforts to produce better economic outcomes. The programs we support are the country’s own. In Ethiopia’s case, the ECF supports the authorities’ Homegrown Economic Reform agenda.

While IMF resources typically go to building international reserves, we also look at the government budget for how funds will be spent and as a key element in macroeconomic policy. We place high emphasis on ensuring that there is good public financial management. Transparency and accountability in the way public funds are used are crucial.

The Ethiopian Herald: It is known that Africa’s voting power and quota in the institution is weak, and on the other hand, the continent is one of the major users of the fund. How do you plan to establish a more inclusive and fair quota system?

Tobias Rasmussen: The IMF is focused on ensuring an inclusive international financial system that meets the evolving needs of this region. We have reached some important milestones just in the past year.

In December 2023, the membership approved a 50 percent increase in IMF member countries’ quotas and agreed to develop by June 2025 possible approaches as a guide for further quota realignment. Also, late last year, we successfully met the fundraising targets for the Poverty Reduction and Growth Trust (PRGT), the Fund’s zero-interest rate lending tool for poor countries.

By March 2024, a total of \$19.5 billion had been raised for PRGT lending resources, along with \$3.1 billion for PRGT subsidy resources

The Ethiopian Herald: Some blocs like the BRICS+ are on the verge of establishing their own financial institutions promising a better service in terms of neutrality and independence. What is your take on?

Tobias Rasmussen: The IMF collaborates successfully with a wide range of institutions across many areas—practices that will continue as the international institutional environment evolves.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Adolescent girls face alarming rates of intimate partner violence

Among adolescent girls who have been in a relationship, nearly a quarter (24%) – close to 19 million – will have experienced physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence by the time they turn 20 years old, as highlighted by a new analysis from the World Health Organization (WHO) published today in *The Lancet Child & Adolescent Health*. Almost 1 in 6 (16%) experienced such violence in the past year.

“Intimate partner violence is starting alarmingly early for millions of young women around the world,” said Dr Pascale Allotey, Director of WHO’s Sexual and Reproductive Health and Research Department. “Given that violence during these critical formative years can cause profound and lasting harms, it needs to be taken more seriously as a public health issue – with a focus on prevention and targeted support.”

Partner violence can have devastating impacts on young people’s health, educational achievement, future relationships, and lifelong prospects. From a health perspective, it heightens the likelihood of injuries, depression, anxiety disorders, unplanned pregnancies, sexually transmitted infections, and many other physical and psychological conditions.

High rates of violence against adolescent girls reflect deeply entrenched inequalities

This study draws on existing data to provide, for the first time, a detailed analysis of the prevalence of physical and/or sexual partner violence experienced by 15–19-year-old girls who have been in intimate relationships. It also identifies broader social, economic and cultural factors that increase their risks.

While violence against adolescent girls occurs everywhere, the authors highlight significant differences in prevalence. Based on WHO’s estimates, the worst affected regions are Oceania (47%) and central sub-Saharan Africa (40%), for instance, while the lowest rates are in central Europe (10%) and central Asia (11%). Between countries, there is also a substantive range: from an estimated 6% adolescent girls subjected to such violence in the least affected countries,



to 49% in those with the highest rates.

The new analysis found that intimate partner violence against adolescent girls is most common in lower-income countries and regions, in places where there are fewer girls in secondary school, and where girls have weaker legal property ownership and inheritance rights compared to men. Child marriage (before the age of 18 years) significantly escalates risks, since spousal age differences create power imbalances, economic dependency, and social isolation – all of which increase the likelihood of enduring abuse.

Adolescent girls need targeted services and support

The study highlights the urgent need to strengthen support services and early prevention measures tailored for adolescents, alongside actions to advance women’s and girls’ agency and rights – from school-based programmes that educate both boys and girls on healthy relationships and violence prevention, to legal protections, and economic empowerment. Since many adolescents lack their own financial resources, they can face particular challenges in leaving abusive relationships.

“The study shows that to end gender-based violence, countries need to have policies and programmes in place that increase equality for women and girls,” said study author Dr Lynnmarie Sardinha, Technical Officer for Violence Against Women Data and Measurement at WHO. “This means ensuring secondary education for all girls, securing gender-equal property rights and ending harmful practices such as child marriage, which are often underpinned by the same inequitable gender norms that perpetuate violence against women and girls.”

Currently, no country is on track to eliminate violence against women and girls by the 2030 Sustainable Development Goal target date. Ending child marriage – which affects 1 in 5 girls globally – and expanding girls’ access to secondary education will be critical factors for reducing partner violence against adolescent girls.

WHO supports countries to measure and address violence against women, including efforts to strengthen prevention and response within the health care sector. New WHO guidelines on prevention of child marriage are planned for release by the end of 2024.

Notes for editors

The study, Intimate partner violence against adolescent girls: regional and national prevalence estimates and associated country-level factors, analyzes both lifetime prevalence and prevalence over the past 12 months of physical and/or sexual partner violence against 15-19 year old girls. Other types of violence, including psychological violence, are not included due to lack of an agreed internationally comparable measure.

It uses data from WHO’s Global database on prevalence of violence against women, published in 2018, which draws on data collected between 2000 and 2018 from 161 countries. Bayesian hierarchical modeling methods were used to generate internationally comparable estimates between countries.

This study was funded by the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Development Office through the WHO-UN Women Joint Programme on Strengthening Violence Against Women Data, and the United Nations’ Special Programme of Research, Development, and Research Training in Human Reproduction (HRP).

Source: who.int

The impact of non-tariff measures on women’s e-commerce businesses in developing countries

E-commerce reshapes global trade, and helps in diversifying its scope and geographical reach, especially for firms in developing countries.

The boom in e-commerce has raised new hope in digitalization as a way of promoting inclusive development and gender equality. This is because e-commerce presents many opportunities for women’s economic empowerment, especially through supporting business growth and diversification in their roles as entrepreneurs.

E-commerce can ease women entrepreneurs’ entry into trade by lowering some of the supply-side barriers that are more severely

experienced by women, particularly in terms of access to finance, to business networks and market opportunities.

Non-tariff measures (NTMs) refer to rules, regulations, and mandatory standards applied to international trade with the aim of preserving legitimate policy objectives such as protecting the environment, ensuring consumer safety, health, and wellbeing.

While NTMs are *de jure* considered gender-neutral, they often have different implications on men and women due to the gendered supply-side constraints, as summarized above.

In online trade, as well as in offline trade, the

process of complying with NTMs may be more burdensome for women than it is for men because of pre-existing gender gaps, compounded with factors related to firm size, exporters’ capacities, the economic sector in which businesses operate, and the accessibility of support systems, among others.

Recognizing the gendered effects of international trade rules is crucial for fostering an environment where women-led businesses can benefit from e-commerce opportunities.

While the use of external support services can mitigate some of the costs associated with NTMs, comprehensive solutions

are needed to ensure that women-led and women-owned enterprises engaged in e-commerce can realise their potential as exporters.

The gender implications of NTMs have been investigated in the context of trade in general; however, the implications of NTMs for women entrepreneurs engaged in e-commerce have not been explored sufficiently.

This study aims to fill this gap and present a review of the implications of NTMs for women-led and women-owned enterprises engaged in e-commerce.

Source: unctad.org

Planet Earth



Metropolis reaps environmental, economic benefits from recycling solid waste

BY FIKADU BELAY

Ethiopia faces significant environmental challenges, from rapid urbanization and industrialization to deforestation and soil degradation. One of the most pressing issues is the growing problem of waste management, particularly in the country's major cities. Piles of uncollected garbage litter the streets, clog drainage systems, and pollute the surrounding environment. This not only harms public health and aesthetics, but also stunts economic development and undermines Ethiopia's burgeoning tourism industry.

Due to the rapid growth of urban populations, coupled with limited infrastructure and resources for proper waste collection and disposal, this has led to widespread open dumping and burning of waste. This releases greenhouse gases like methane and releases pollutants that degrade air, water, and soil quality.

To address these issues, the Ethiopian government and the Addis Ababa Cleansing Management Agency have been working to improve waste management and increase recycling and reuse. These waste management and recycling efforts in Ethiopia are helping to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, pollution, and the overall environmental impact of the country's rapidly growing waste volumes. Continued investment and expansion of these programs will be crucial for Ethiopia to build a more sustainable, climate-resilient waste system.

Currently, in Ethiopia, waste recycling is also playing a key role in protecting the country's precious natural habitats. At the recycling hubs, waste is sorted, processed, and transformed into a variety of marketable goods. Plastic waste, for instance, is cleaned, shredded, and pelletized, then sold to manufacturers who use it to produce everything from building materials to consumer products. Organic waste is composted and sold to farmers as nutrient-rich fertilizer. Even textiles and electronics

are dismantled, with the components reused or repurposed.

General Director, at Addis Ababa Cleansing Management Agency, Eshetu Lema (PhD) stated that the agency made significant strides in improving solid waste management during the last fiscal year. He noted that their efforts to increase the capacity of waste collection and recycling made 4,900 city blocks accessible for regular garbage pickup.

As a result of these efforts, the agency was able to collect over 900,000 tons of waste, with an impressive 87% collected directly from households through door-to-door services. He attributed this high collection rate to the agency's successful public awareness campaigns that encouraged residents to participate in the garbage collection program.

In addition to the increased collection of waste, the director highlighted the agency's work to recycle a substantial portion of the leftover. He mentioned that 90,000 tons of the collected material were recycled, generating valuable raw materials that can be sold for foreign currency. Also, it is estimated that the recycling efforts have already earned over 1.4 billion birr for the city.

These facilities employ local residents, primarily women and youth, to collect recyclables from households and businesses, sort them by material type, and prepare them for sale to recycling enterprises. Not only does this create much-needed green jobs, but the extra income also helps lift families out of poverty.

He mentioned that the agency's waste collection and reuse initiatives have the potential to generate over 3,000 new job opportunities for citizens in the last fiscal year. By effectively managing and repurposing waste streams, the agency can foster the development of a circular economy, creating sustainable employment while improving environmental outcomes for the community.

To further incentivize recycling, the Agency

has partnered with the concerned government parts to implement deposit-refund schemes and levies on single-use plastics. The revenue generated is then channeled back into community development projects, creating a virtuous cycle that benefits both the environment and local communities.

The Director also discussed the agency's efforts to create linkages between composting associations and urban farmers. He explained that the compost produced from the organic waste is being supplied to parks, gardens, and individuals engaged in urban agriculture, further maximizing the reuse of the city's waste.

However, he acknowledged that the city's network of around 200 waste storage sites is inadequate, with poor infrastructure and unsightly conditions that pose health risks. To address this, the agency plans to construct at least 10 modern waste storage facilities each year, with 14 such projects scheduled for completion in the current fiscal year.

He emphasized that these new storage sites will be designed as temporary holding areas, as the agency continues to work on modernizing Addis Ababa's overall waste disposal processes. He remarked that the city has already converted one-fifth of its collected waste into electricity through waste-to-energy initiatives.

The agency also places a strong emphasis on creating beautiful public spaces out of what were once dumping grounds. Vacant lots and neglected areas are being transformed into vibrant community parks, gardens, and recreational areas, providing green oases for residents and enhancing the overall aesthetics of Ethiopia's cities.

These spaces not only improve the quality of life for local communities, but also serve as attractive destinations for eco-tourists seeking to experience Ethiopia's natural and cultural riches.

To further boost eco-tourism, he said that

the agency is working with the Addis Ababa Culture, Tourism, and Art Bureau and the Federal Parks Corporation to clean up and restore natural areas that have been degraded by improper waste disposal. From national parks to historic sites, the initiative is leading cleanup efforts, installing waste management infrastructure, and empowering local communities to become stewards of their environmental assets. This not only improves the visitor experience, but also generates sustainable economic opportunities for communities through eco-tourism-related jobs and services.

Furthermore, the government to create the "Clean Ethiopia for a Better Life" initiative, which combines improved waste collection, innovative recycling, and community engagement to generate income opportunities while beautifying urban spaces and bolstering ecotourism.

The government should strengthen waste management policies, secure sustainable financing, and build the capacity of recycling enterprises. It is also fostering partnerships with international development organizations, NGOs, and the private sector to share knowledge, mobilize resources, and replicate best practices across the country.

Besides, the director's report highlighted the agency's significant progress in enhancing waste collection, recycling, and sustainable disposal practices in Addis. These efforts are not only improving the city's cleanliness and environmental sustainability, but also generating substantial economic benefits for the city's society.

With its holistic approach to waste, livelihoods, and sustainable tourism, the Clean Ethiopia for a Better Life initiative represents a promising model for urban environmental transformation in the developing world. By turning trash into treasure, the program is not only cleaning up Ethiopia's cities. But also empowering communities and shaping a more vibrant, ecologically-conscious future.