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## FOCAC 2024: Huge leap towards ensuring Africa's prosperity

BY YESUF ENDRIS

China has committed nearly 51 billion USD in funding to Africa over the next three years, with the goal of creating one million jobs, a move announced during the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) Leaders' Summit. The initiative, unveiled by President Xi Jinping, includes 10 partnership actions aimed at deepening cooperation. This includes opening China's market to African countries and expanding ties through multilateral agreements.

*China Daily* reported that these actions would support African countries by expanding market access and fostering development. The move comes as China continues to strengthen its ties with Africa, with several bilateral and multilateral agreements being signed at the summit.

See FOCAC 2024: Huge ... Page 3



## Macroeconomic reforms centers on nurturing vibrant private sector

• Majority of banking resources directed to private sector

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

**ADDIS ABABA** - Ethiopia's historic macroeconomic reforms are designed to increase private sector involvement and ensure efficiency within a stable macroeconomic framework, according to the Governor of the National Bank of Ethiopia (NBE), Mamo Mihretu.

Addressing investors' concerns on Thursday, Governor Mamo stated that the government has implemented key measures in the macroeconomic reform sector, which are already

See Macroeconomic ... Page 3

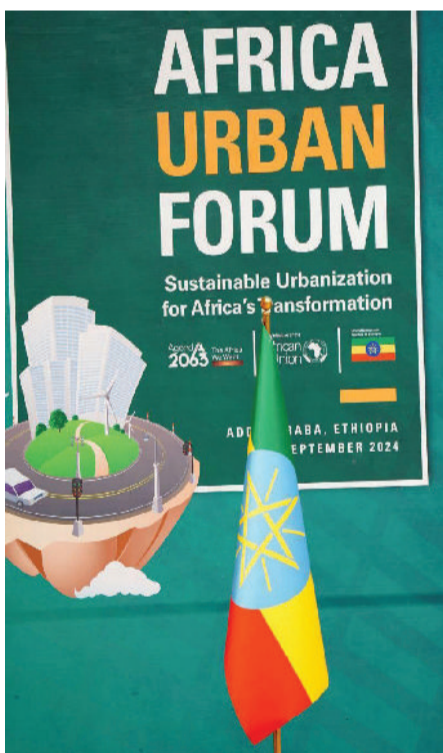


Photo: Berihun Tadele

## Integrated governance entails to fast tracking African landscapes

BY ASHENAFI ANIMUT

**ADDIS ABABA** - Integrating multilevel governance is necessary to shape urban continental landscapes and address immediate urbanization woes, Addis Ababa Deputy Mayor urged.

See Integrated governance ... Page 3

## Ethiopia glorifies resilience, progress on 'Transformation Day'

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

**ADDIS ABABA**- Ethiopia remains unwavering on its path toward growth and prosperity, overcoming challenges with resilience, according to Deputy Prime Minister Temesgen Tirunch.

Speaking at the 'Day of Transformation' and recognition program yesterday, the Deputy Prime Minister highlighted the country's remarkable success in the face of complex challenges over recent years.

"Today, at our Breakthrough Day program, we celebrate a pivotal moment in our nation's quest to overcome poverty and achieve prosperity, acknowledging key policy advancements and empowering our people for the next phase of development," he stated.

Temesgen also noted that ongoing developmental efforts and achievements show the government's policy direction is on the right path. The success in wheat production has not only boosted agricultural output and farmer livelihoods but also contributed to import substitution.

Industries that had ceased operations



Photo: Gebabo Gebrie

due to various challenges have resumed production, playing a significant role in reducing imports. The 'Let Ethiopia Produce' initiative has strengthened the manufacturing sector, expanded exports, substituted imports, and created numerous jobs, according to the Deputy Premier.

Mentioning the nation's flagship project, the Abbay Dam, he pointed out that despite

various challenges during its construction, it has become a symbol of Ethiopia's sovereignty.

Tourism has also been a government priority, leading to the development of several tourist attractions and heritage sites under initiatives such as 'Dine for Nation' and 'Dine for Sheger.'

See Ethiopia glorifies... Page 3

# News

## Addis celebrates transformation with focus on key sectors

BY MESERET BEHAILU

**ADDIS ABABA-** The Addis Ababa City Administration has highlighted the growth potential of tourism, agriculture, technology, and industry as key drivers in Ethiopia's path to prosperity.

Speaking at Meskel Square during the "Transformation Day" celebration, Deputy Mayor and the Addis Ababa Industry Development Bureau Head Jantirar Abay emphasized the country's achievements in these sectors. The event, held under the theme "Transforming Resources: New Light Fad" during Ethiopia's 13th month, Pagumen, showcased the nation's progress.

In his opening remarks, Jantirar stated that Addis Ababa has been actively addressing challenges like the high cost of living by expanding supply and stabilizing markets. He also noted the city's ongoing efforts to bridge the gap between manufacturers



Photo: Hadush Abrahah

and consumers, aiming to ease the burden on residents. Addis Ababa's development initiatives are positioning it as a model for

other African cities.

Jantirar further praised Ethiopia's rich

heritage, unity, and its unique alphabet and calendar. He urged the current generation to contribute to the country's prosperity and ensure a brighter future for the next generation.

Addis Ababa Culture, Arts, and Tourism Bureau Head, Hirut Kassaw (PhD), noted the completion of several mega projects that will boost tourism and enhance the city's global image. She pointed out that ongoing efforts to improve urban agriculture, productivity, and modernize the city are integral to making Addis Ababa a thriving tourist destination. The push towards becoming a 24/7 city and transitioning to a smart city model were also noted as significant steps.

Hirut called on all stakeholders to work together in achieving a prosperous Ethiopia.

Pagumen, Ethiopia's unique 13th month, marks the end of the rainy season and the start of the Ethiopian New Year, spanning five or six days and varying every four years.

### Ethiopia launches remittance campaign

• Banks allocate 100 bln Birr loans

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

**ADDIS ABABA -** Ethiopian banks have launched a large-scale remittance campaign yesterday aimed at promoting the legal transfer of diaspora finances to assist national development, the central bank announced.

Under the guidance of the National Bank of Ethiopia (NBE), all Ethiopian banks have launched a remittance campaign dubbed "DEBO," to encourage Ethiopians living abroad to legally send remittance home. The NBE disclosed that all banks have pledged to provide over 100 billion Birr loans as part of the remittance campaign which stays for the coming six months. During the launching event, NBE Governor, Mamo Mihretu said that the remittance campaign will involve a major initiative that encourage Ethiopians abroad to remit funds via banks by offering attractive exchange rates, opening accounts in local or foreign currency, and taking advantage of various savings and lending products such as mortgage loans, vehicle loans, and SME loans linked to remittances.

This more encourages Ethiopian living abroad to send remittance to home legally and transparently, he said, adding that NBE has also launched a new platform called Unite. et, which will allow Ethiopians and foreigners of Ethiopian origin to open bank accounts in Ethiopia virtually.

The Governor stated that the central bank is working on monetary policy reforms and campaign, and launched platform that helps to boost foreign exchange rate and reduces the previous 86 various foreign exchange rates administration and this will shorten and make it in one platform system.

An increased remittance benefits Ethiopia in terms of investment attraction, encourage saving and alleviate poverty, Mamo said.

The Remittance Campaign, themed: "DEBO together, investing in tomorrow," would facilitate smooth flow of remittance, which is vital to develop financial inclusion, transparent exchange rate, promote legal transfer and create conducive business environment for banks.

## MoWSA emphasizes on fostering innovative youth

\* Launches youth-centered financial organization

BY MESERET BEHAILU

**ADDIS ABABA -** Consolidating concerted efforts is urgently needed to empower innovative and productive youth that expedites country's prosperity, Ministry of Women and Social Affairs (MoWSA) said.

Officially launching Kefeta Youth Saving and Credit Cooperatives Organization (SACCO), which established to solve financial problems of the youth, MoWSA Minister Ergogie Tesfaye (PhD) said that her ministry is empowering young citizens since they are the backbone of country's economic development and prosperity.

She stressed that Kefeta should work in concert with the ministry to prevent the youth exposure to drugs and overcome the negative impacts of globalization.

According to her, Kefeta is a promising youth-centered financial organization, which inclusively serves persons with disability.

"Under MoWSA, some 24 million volunteers have been provided with constructive services whilst over 50 million elderly being benefited last year merely. The Ministry is also working with various stakeholders such as the Ministry



of Labor and Skills (MoLS) aimed at realizing all-inclusive development that benefits the youth too," Ergogie stated.

She underlined the need to implement integrated effort to ensure youth empowerment, increase production and productivity, maximize entrepreneur, and so on.

Amref Health Africa Country Director Misrak Mekonen on her part said that the inauguration of the financial organization is crucial to empower youth as it provides finance, bridges skill

and knowledge gap, among others.

USAID Mission Director in Ethiopia, Scott Hocklander also stated that the organization will capacitate the youth in economy, education, and other spectrums. The USAID encourages such initiatives that help to empower the youth.

"This is a special event for me that help the youth in saving, crediting, and empowering them at large. However, proper program should be designed to run the business in effective and efficient ways," Hocklander said.

## Gender labor ratio reflects modest progress in 2024: ILO

BY STAFF REPORTER

**ADDIS ABABA -** Gender labor income ratio has increased to 51.8 % and labor income grown by 53% in 2024, the International Labor Organization (ILO) announced.

In its 2024 labor report, ILO revealed that labor income per hour worked has grown by 53 % at the global level, even while the labor share declined due to multiple factors. Indeed, many have been studied in the economic literature, including changes in product markets, labor markets, capital markets, and globalization.

Substantial gender gaps in labor income are seen worldwide since the global ratio of women's to men's labor income was 46.8 % over the past decades. This implies that for each dollar that men earned in labor income, women earned only 47 cents, it said.

By 2024, the ratio increased to 51.8 %, reflecting modest progress. The ratio of labor income by gender reflects the relative importance of earnings from work, taking into account differentials in employment and in pay among the employed due to differences in hour worked, occupational profiles, and other factors, it added.

The ratio can be interpreted as the cumulative impact of compounding imbalances and inequities in the labor market. The global increase in women's labor income masks wide regional differences. In 2024, the ratio of women's to men's labor income in the Arab States region is only 12.4 %, while Africa follows with a ratio of 34.7 %.

In 2024, the ratios for Asia and the Pacific, Europe and Central Asia, and the Americas regions are 44.2, 61.9, and 64.7 % respectively. This reflects substantial progress from their 2005 levels, when they stood at 36.8, 53.9, and 54.0 % respectively.

Recent advances in artificial intelligence make the study of the role of technological change in determining the labor income share particularly relevant. Critically, the exercise that follows is not a simulation or a forecast about the impacts of AI. This is because even if recent progress in the AI field, such as the launch of ChatGPT, represents a technological breakthrough, the uncertainty concerning its economic impact is still very large, it stated.

Moreover, recent studies also point to technological factors, such as automation, being one of the key factors behind the long-run declines observed in the labor income share. As a complement to the empirical findings in the literature, it is useful to consider theoretical work, it was learnt.

# News

## Macroeconomic reforms centers...

yielding positive results. The primary goal of the reforms is to strengthen private sector participation by creating a stable macroeconomic environment. These reforms aim to promote exports, encourage investment, foster import substitution, and support the manufacturing sector.

The Governor emphasized that these efforts will enhance the competitiveness and efficiency of the private sector, leading to job creation and improved performance. Additionally, the reforms will address foreign exchange distortions, balance trade, and reduce inflation, creating a healthier economic environment for businesses.

Governor Mamo highlighted the current reforms as a “golden opportunity” for the private sector to create sustainable jobs, expand investments, and contribute significantly to the national economy. He urged the private sector to harness these opportunities and utilize the available



resources to boost their businesses.

In the long term, the reforms are expected to improve the competitiveness of

the private sector, particularly in the manufacturing industry, driving structural transformation. One significant reform

allows investors to repatriate 100% of their income, dividends, and other export earnings, providing greater financial flexibility.

He also pointed out that five years ago, 90% of bank deposits were allocated to public development enterprises. However, this has shifted, and the majority of banking resources are now directed to private sector creditors, with credit approval processes adhering to legal banking standards. The reforms focus on addressing the needs of the manufacturing sector to boost production, productivity, and import substitution.

Governor Mamo concluded by encouraging the private sector to play its part in utilizing the opportunities presented by the ongoing macroeconomic reforms, which are crucial to driving Ethiopia's economic transformation.

## Integrated governance entails...

While addressing the panelists and attendees, with the Rank of Deputy Mayor of Addis Ababa city, General Manager Wondimu Seta (Eng.) emphasized that the integration of multilevel governance system plays a significant role to addressing the immediate challenges of urbanization and anticipating future needs and progress.

Wondimu has also stated that supported by national policies, the metropolis has experienced and offering valuable lessons and exemplifies a robust local governance frameworks to empower local authorities to make decision that directly impact the wellbeing of their communities.

During the panel discussion which sought to explore dynamics of urbanization, the challenges of territorial and urban planning

in the African context, the deputy stressed to fostering partnership and leveraging shared experience, across all level of government to make the citizens resilient, vibrant and inclusive.

“As urban areas expand, the unrepresented rates of understanding and addressing the dynamics is essential for sustainable growth and making African cities engines for structural, economic and social transformation.”

According to him, African cities should also be catalysts for broader economic and social transformation by enhancing productivity and promoting social inclusion.

The future of Africa's development lies in its

cities, so developing insights and strategies would be instrumental in unlocking the potential in shaping the urban landscapes of the continent, he indicated.

“It is also critical to address financing as cities grow innovative financing mechanism and the role of public private partnership mechanism for mobilizing the necessary resources to meet the demands of urban development,” Wondimu said.

For her part, UN-Habitat Executive Director Anaclaudia Roszbach stated that the local governments should promote and implement participatory multilevel governance, recognizing the relevance of having national frameworks that support urbanization and development in cities.

She has also recommended that these governments should be at the forefront on the development of their own territories propelling the people and housing at the center.

As about 50% of the African population is living in informal settlements with infrastructure gaps such as water, electricity and quality of life, she advocated for wise utilization of resources as a crucial aspect of social and ecological function.

“It is also very critical to balance the general ecosystem and conserve the natural diversity to mitigate climate change and ensuring food security,” the Executive Director remarked.

## Ethiopia...

“As the New Year brings hope and a fresh journey, both the government and the people need to approach the coming year with renewed commitment and enthusiasm to achieve even greater results across all sectors. Without taking the current successes for granted, extra effort will be made to address remaining challenges and further the nation's progress,” he said.

Planning and Development Minister Fistum Assefa (PhD) echoed these sentiments, emphasizing that despite internal and external challenges, Ethiopia has maintained an average economic growth rate of over seven percent, placing it third in sub-Saharan Africa and first in East Africa.

The minister highlighted significant achievements in agriculture, tourism, manufacturing, and energy, contributing to Ethiopia's food self-sufficiency goals, expanding agricultural productivity, creating jobs, and boosting the tourism sector.

In recognition of their contributions, institutions and individuals from these sectors received appreciation awards from the Deputy Prime Minister.

Both African and Chinese leaders have praised the strengthening of their relations, with President Xi describing the partnership as being at its best in history.

On the second day of the summit, China signed 17 cooperation agreements with Ethiopia, reinforcing the “all-weather comprehensive strategic cooperation” between the two countries. Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) reiterated Ethiopia's commitment to enhancing this partnership during a meeting with Chinese Premier Li Qiang. The agreements between the two countries focus on industrialization, infrastructure, and the digital economy, supported by the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and FOCAC frameworks. Premier Li also pledged to support Ethiopia's talent development through educational programs and scholarship.

China is also broadening its economic

## FOCAC 2024: Huge leap...

relations with other African countries by offering zero-tariff treatment for 100% of their tariff lines, becoming the first developing country to do so. This policy is expected to boost African agricultural exports to and strengthen ties under the “China-Africa quality enhancement program.”

United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres commended China-Africa cooperation as a vital pillar of South-South cooperation, though he emphasized the importance of continued responsibility from the global North. He also expressed hope that the partnership would create new momentum for African development.

South Africa, a key partner of China, also responded positively to the new partnership actions, with President Cyril Ramaphosa stating that the collaboration would help Africa implement the African Continental Free Trade Area. He noted that China-Africa

relations are essential as the continent works to build a network of linkages between countries.

Kenya, another strong partner of China, thanked the latter for its support in infrastructure development. Kenyan President William Ruto, during his meeting with President Xi, expressed gratitude for China's investment in Kenya's national economy and expressed optimism for continued cooperation.

Many African leaders, including those from Ethiopia, Kenya, and South Africa, have voiced their readiness for the expanded cooperation that China has outlined through the Belt and Road Initiative and other development actions. China, the host of the FOCAC, is expected to enhance communication and collaboration with African nations at the continental, regional, and international levels.

# Opinion

## Advanced reform for better diplomatic relations, public service

BY HIZKEL HAILU

In the realm of public administration, the call for reform resonates with increasing urgency as societies grapple with the complexities of the modern age. At the heart of this reform agenda lays the imperative to cultivate a culture of innovation and adaptability within the public service.

The nation has gone through several reforms in terms of diplomacy, defense force, the Abbay Dam construction, beautifying the cities through corridor development, tourist attraction sites via Gebeta for Sheger, for country and for generation and launching special economic zones among others.

Ethiopia has made magnificent progress in the realm of diplomatic reform starting from the neighboring countries to across the globe making its foundation on ensuring peaceful relations, mutual benefits and protecting national interest. In so doing, it could join the alternative economic and diplomatic bloc, BRICS, which enables it diversify its economic relations.

As it is located in the politically volatile and conflict ridden area, Ethiopia made great effort to reform its defense force in the way it can defend its sovereignty from any attack with complete preparedness of moral and armaments. All the forces are well equipped accommodating members from all sections of the people exhibiting the picture of Ethiopia.

In the economic arena, the country has gone long distance by taking landslide reform measures like in the policy change of finance including exchange rate. The reform in finance, in particular, is one of the reforms the government has made taking great risk that might happen with it. Leaving the foreign exchange rate to be governed by market which was under the command of the National Bank has to be taken as a big step aiming to accelerate the economic progress.

Though it needs more effort, a lot has been done in the service delivery sector. Since the sector has a touch with any activity in the country, the public service delivery should be governed by servant leadership motive genuinely and balanced without any bias for any customer whether local or foreigner.

The conventional bureaucratic framework, with its rigid structures and cumbersome decision-making processes, is proving inadequate in the face of today's dynamic challenges. To navigate these turbulent waters effectively, a paradigm shift is imperative—one that nurtures an agile and inventive ethos among public servants.

This shift beckons us to transcend traditional boundaries, embrace experimentation, and foster a relentless pursuit of enhanced service delivery. In this article, we delve into the pivotal role of innovation in reshaping public administration, exploring how a forward-thinking approach can catalyze

transformative change and enhance the responsiveness of governance structures to the evolving needs of society.

It is arguable that in an era marked by growing societal challenges and heightened public expectations, it is seemingly important to have a comprehensive reform of every public service. As a nation which is grappled with complex issues ranging from healthcare and education to infrastructure and environmental protection, it is clear that the traditional modes of public administration are no longer sufficient to meet the evolving needs of the communities. It is time to rethink and reshape the way one deliver essential public services, ensuring that they are more responsive, efficient, and aligned with the aspirations of the people we serve.

At the heart of this reform lies the recognition that the public sector must adapt to the changing landscape of the 21st century. The rapid advancements in technology; the increasing complexity of societal problems and the shifting demands of citizens have all contributed to a growing disconnection between the government and the people. To bridge this gap, every servant must adopt a new paradigm that places the needs and well-being of the public at the forefront of our decision-making processes.

Cognizant of this fact Ethiopia as a nation is also striving to reform the public service for better achievement and success. The government of Ethiopia has named each day of the thirteenth month of Ethiopia, Pagumen. Necessarily Pagumen 2 or September 7 is named as "the reform day" under a theme reform for better public service. As the people of Ethiopia embark on the ambitious journey, the nation's collective quest for reform and better public service has never been more pronounced. Since the assumption of power of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) and his governmental crew in 2018, Ethiopia has witnessed a remarkable transformation, marked by a renewed commitment to good governance, transparency, and a deep-rooted desire to deliver more effective and responsive public services to its citizens.

As the structure and organization of public institutions is one of the key areas that require immediate attention, public agencies operate in silos, with little coordination or collaboration across departments. This fragmented approach not only leads to inefficiencies and duplication of efforts but also hinders the ability to provide holistic solutions to the challenges faced by the public. Through fostering a more integrated and collaborative approach, it is possible to unlock new synergies and leverage the diverse expertise within the public sector to deliver more comprehensive and effective services.

This day represents a crucial next step in this transformative process. Building upon

the foundational reforms initiated by the reformist administration, Pagumen 2 aims to further streamline and optimize the public sector, ensuring that it is better equipped to address the pressing needs of the Ethiopian people.

One of the key pillars of the reform agenda should be the restructuring of government institutions and agencies. Through breaking down the traditional silos that have long hampered inter-departmental coordination, the initiative seeks to create a more integrated and collaborative public service. This will not only enhance the efficiency of service delivery but also enable the government to tackle complex societal challenges in a more holistic manner.

Another critical aspect of reform is the need to instill a culture of innovation and adaptability within the public service. The traditional bureaucratic model, characterized by rigid hierarchies and slow-moving decision-making processes, is ill-equipped to respond to the rapidly changing demands of modern society. The public servant must embrace a more agile and innovative mindset, one that encourages public servants to think outside the box, experiment with new approaches, and continuously seek ways to improve the delivery of services.

The integration of advanced technologies is another critical component of the public service reforms in Ethiopia. The rapid digitization of government services, coupled with the adoption of data-driven decision-making, will help to streamline administrative processes, reduce bureaucratic delays, and improve the overall user experience for citizens. From online platforms for accessing public services to the utilization of artificial intelligence for streamlining workflows, the public sector is poised to embrace the power of technology to better serve the people.

Alongside these structural and technological advancements, the initiative places a strong emphasis on fostering a culture of innovation and adaptability within the public service. Through empowering public servants to think creatively, experiment with new approaches, and continuously seeking ways to improve service delivery, the government aims to cultivate a more agile and responsive public sector.

This shift in mindset is further bolstered by a renewed focus on customer-centricity. The reforms will prioritize the needs and preferences of citizens, ensuring that public services are designed and delivered in a manner that truly meets the evolving demands of the communities they serve. Through the implementation of design thinking principles and the solicitation of feedback from the public, the government is committed to co-creating solutions that are tailored to the unique requirements of the Ethiopian people.

Underpinning these reform efforts is a steadfast commitment to transparency,

accountability, and ethical governance. The reformist government has already taken significant strides in this direction, with the introduction of anti-corruption measures, the establishment of independent oversight bodies, and the promotion of open data initiatives. Pagumen 2 seeks to build upon this foundation, further strengthening the public's trust in their government and demonstrating an unwavering dedication to serving the greater good.

To ensure the sustained success of these reforms, the government also places a strong emphasis on talent management within the public sector. Through offering competitive compensation, robust training and development programs, and a nurturing work environment, the government aims to attract and retain the best and brightest minds in the country. This investment in human capital will not only enhance the capabilities of the public service but also foster a sense of ownership and commitment among public servants, who will be empowered to drive transformative change.

As Ethiopia embarks on the reform journey, the nation stands at a pivotal moment in its history. The reforms outlined in this ambitious initiative have the potential to fundamentally reshape the relationship between the government and the people, ushering in a new era of public service that is more responsive, efficient, and aligned with the aspirations of the Ethiopian populace. By embracing these reforms with unwavering resolve, the country can position itself as a model of good governance and inspire other nations to follow suit, ultimately contributing to the broader global movement for better public service.

All in all, the imperative to infuse innovation and adaptability into the fabric of public service stands as a linchpin in the quest for effective and responsive governance. The imperative for change is underscored by the limitations of the conventional bureaucratic model in meeting the multifaceted demands of contemporary society.

By fostering a culture that champions creativity, experimentation, and continuous improvement, we can unlock the latent potential within our public institutions and empower public servants to become architects of positive change. Embracing innovation not only enhances the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery but also cultivates a spirit of resilience and agility essential for navigating the complexities of the modern era. As we chart a course toward a more innovative and adaptable public service, let us heed the call to transcend complacency, embrace uncertainty, and forge a dynamic path toward a brighter future for governance and public administration.

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

# Editorial

## Diplomatic reform promoting national interests, peaceful relations

Ethiopia has gone through various reforms since the assumption of power of the current incumbent six years ago. Among others, the reforms include Ethiopia's foreign relations in which it has registered diplomatic advancement. As the global political, economic and social landscape is dynamic, any state needs to undergo reform to go along with the world's trend and Ethiopia is not exceptional.

Endorsing the reality on the ground, Ethiopia has tirelessly worked to make its diplomatic relations led by professionals. Professionalism in diplomacy is the dictate of the time to ensure the country's national interests. To this end, Ethiopia exerted great effort on assigning professional diplomats across the globe and the outcome showcases the effort is bearing fruits in terms of strengthened bilateral and multilateral relations with different countries.

Indeed, Ethiopian diplomats have been doing professionally what their country expects from them in the areas of investment attraction, trade relations, searching markets for Ethiopian products and facilitating aids and loans necessary to accelerate the economic progress.

In this new era of diplomatic activities, engagement in digital diplomacy has become the order of the day. Taking into account the traditional way of diplomacy does not take anywhere, Ethiopia's diplomatic relations has taken digital diplomacy as a part of the reform and assigned well trained diplomats in the digital area. Providing appropriate training is taken as a part of the reform to produce new diplomats that have the knowhow of the modern technology and easily adoptable with it.

This strategic move has not been in vain. It is bearing fruit in creating strategic partnership with many countries in all corners of the world. As a result, Ethiopia today could make strategic relationship with the countries from the west and the east as well as from the north and south of which some are all weather strategic partnership.

Reform in the country's foreign relation is a must do action not only to protect its national interests towards the foreign world, but also to shoulder unpredictable happenings in the ever changing world. The reform has come to Ethiopia with the opportunities of maximizing its friends while minimizing its enemies starting from the neighboring countries and expanding to the oversea world.

Predominantly, its diplomatic relations with any country and the neighboring countries in particular, made its foundation on ensuring mutual benefit. The effort it is making to integrate these countries with energy, infrastructure and other economic sectors is among movements that oil the wheel.

Apart from Ethiopia's peaceful diplomatic journey, however, some countries have chosen distractive way opposing Ethiopia's interest. They stand against its endeavor of using its own resource like opposing the construction of hydropower generation plants and its historical, justified and legitimate use of sea access. In any case, Ethiopia gives the upper hand for diplomatic and peaceful solution to the matter like the way it has chosen in the case of Somalia.

Be it is, in advance preparedness for any unexpected situation in terms of defending national interest and sovereignty is not put aside. Along with strengthening diplomatic activities, Ethiopia wants to inform those run up and down to destabilize the Horn of African region and Ethiopia, to think twice before going a step forward. Ethiopia's reform includes modernizing its defense force making ready for any kind of un-peaceful activity.

In a nutshell, Ethiopia's reform in foreign relations makes its foundation on peaceful bilateral and multilateral relations and ensuring mutual benefits. It desires other parties should also recognize this genuine move and go accordingly.

# Opinion

## Reforms, challenges in Ethiopia's development journey to Unity and Prosperity (2018-2024)

BY SOLOMON DIBABA

As the Ethiopian New Year is just at the corner, the nation marks Pagumen 2, 2016 as the day of national reform. Despite some challenges, the country and its political order effectively cruised through these challenges and registered remarkable socio-economic, diplomatic and political successes uncommon in the past history of the country.

### Promotion of Justice and human rights

Six years back, the reformist government headed by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed took drastic measures in releasing hundreds of thousands of inmates who were languishing in the official and secret dungeons of the EPRDF regime in which citizens were castrated, tortured. The government introduced far reaching political reforms by inviting foreign based opposition political parties and their armed groups to come home and participate in developing their country by conducting mutual rapprochement and constructive dialogues. Almost all of the opposition political parties managed to come back home while some of them are even participating in the current government.

### Reforms in the Justice System

Introducing major reforms in the country's legal and juridical and legislative system was one of the elements of the reform package was implemented by the government over the last six years. Shortly after Abiy's appointment in April 2018, a Legal and Justice Affairs Advisory Council (LJAAC) was established by directive with the aim of making basic reforms on the draconian laws of the previous regime. Its mandate was to advise the Attorney General on matters related to legal and justice system reform. New Proclamations including proclamation on National Election Board of Ethiopia (1133- 2019), Ethiopian Electoral Political Parties Registration and Election Code of Conduct (1162-2019), Civil Society Proclamation (1113-2019), Proclamation on Prevention and Suppression Terrorism (1176-2020) and Media Proclamation (1238-2021). The Proclamation on the formation of a National Dialogue Commission to address the age old differences and challenges in the country through national dialogue is already gaining momentum with the process of agenda selection in most of the regions and zones as well as two city administrations across the country. Besides Options on Transitional Justice Policy was well discussed among stakeholders and have been approved for implementation.

### Economic reforms and Achievements

A national economic reform program which was established at the national level was led by a macro team, chaired by the Prime Minister. The macro team had four sub-teams leading the reform in relevant sectors. The background study of Ethiopia's long term perspective plan suggested to revisit exemptions and tax incentives provided to attract Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). Mega projects and a number of State Owned Enterprises (SOE) that failed due to weak project execution capacity to be privatized in order to improved competitiveness.

Prior to the introduction of Ten Years Perspective Plan a Home grown economic plan was introduced to establish the major background for sustainable economic development of the country.

Formulation of Ethiopia's Ten Years Perspective Plan (2021- 2030) to tackle macroeconomic imbalance, inflation, high unemployment rate, rising foreign debt, chronic foreign currency

shortage, sluggish structural change, vulnerability to various economic shocks, poor quality and inequality in infrastructure outreach.

In this regard export oriented agriculture was given a top priority and as the result Ethiopia has now managed to cease export of wheat in import substitution saving million USD as of the current year. The increase in the production of wheat has now reached 1.3 million with projected more than 52 million quintals in the current harvest season. Ethiopia no more imports wheat from abroad as both dry season irrigated wheat production and summer wheat harvest has resulted in self-sufficiency and possible export of wheat. In line with the National Green Legacy Initiative, more than 30 billion trees were planted in five years far above plan. Foreign Direct Investment has now reached 2.2 billion USD. As the result of reform in fiscal policy, the government introduced new bank notes to control the flow of local currency.

### Reforms in foreign policy objectives, diplomacy and foreign relations

Ethiopia introduced new elements into the foreign policy objectives of the country including citizen's rights focused diplomacy, economic diplomacy to foster FDI for industrial and agricultural development, pursuing special diplomatic relations with the neighboring countries, the July 8, 2018 accord with Eritrea, further strengthening of operational relations with AU and IGAD, promoting peace keeping missions in Somalia, Sudan and South Sudan in Abiye and Darfur, More profound relations with China, Russia and India on the basis of mutual benefits. Despite challenges, Ethiopia maintained good standing in the UN and other global and regional organization in which the nation is actively participating. Ethiopia's membership into BRICS is another landmark development which expanded the country's global economic and political cooperation.

### Reforms in the Education Sector

The new education roadmap (2018-2030) that was issued by the government in consultation with local stakeholders and international partners envisions linking education with the development needs of the country and to produce qualified professionals that can manage the socio-economic development programs of the country. Lately the right too autonomous administration of public universities and promotion of standards for quality education right from nursery to the institutes of higher education is underway. Promotion of university-industry linkage strategy was issued a couple of years back in view of producing highly qualified experts to manage the industries that are growing in the country. Universities were granted self-management and autonomy in administration.

### Industrial Reforms

Since 2018 industry showed a modest 7-8% growth of GDP and more focus was made on inviting FDI in textile and apparel, leather and leather products, meat processing plants, food processing, beverages, cement, steel and horticulture and cut flowers. The reform program in the industrial sector introduced vast incentives to encourage the private sector to fully engage in the production of the above mentioned commodities in the industrial parks. The government provided special incentives for local investors to use such opportunities like loans, extension of grace period and other means. Major public and private manufacturing sectors like METEC were rehabilitated while a number of cement factories were provided with multiple sets of support.

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



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# Art & Culture

## Reform for excellent service, New Year's mass responsibility

BY NAOL GIRMA

Ethiopia will welcome its unique new year of 2017 by the end of its exclusive thirteenth month: Pagumiene; this week. Pagumiene; the Ethiopian thirteenth month is the last and shortest month of the Ethiopian calendar. Usually,, Pagumiene is described as a month of mercy, transition, and preparation for a new year. The unique month is said to be the result of the Ethiopian Calendar; a combined effort of ancient Ethiopian astronomers to fit the bill for seasonal changes.

Ethiopia as a Nation has been through several multifaceted reforms over the past six years and the thirteenth-month Pagumiene is chosen to give a taste of the practical reforms that the country is trying to achieve, by naming each day of the Pagumiene after positive themes that will inspire citizens, during the past six months.

On this passing Ethiopian year of 2016, the first day of Pagumiene is dedicated to transition, day two is devoted to the day of reform for excellent service the third is Sovereignty Day the Fourth is the day of Unity and finally the fifth is the day of commitment.

Tilahun Gugsa is one of the prominent popular Ethiopian artists and the Director General of Tilahun Gugsa Advertising and Artistic Promotion PLC. He is a writer, director, and actor in various plays and TV dramas. According to him Pagumiene, which mostly consists of five days and becomes six every four years, is a month that doesn't exist in any of the calendars around the world. In his understanding, the new tradition of dedicating each day of Pagumiene to positive themes is crucial in terms of reminding society of what achievements could have been made during the passing year and could also be achieved in the coming New Year.

Tilahun describes the socioeconomic and political journey of Ethiopia during the passing year as a tough one with several plausible successes and tragic events. "The country of course has achieved so much during this year. What we have seen in Addis Ababa with the City and Corridor development, riverside projects, and other ecotourism projects in different parts of the country, such as the Wanchi and Gorgora, was a remarkable developmental achievement. However, there are fearful symptoms of alien practices sneaking into our descent cultures and harming children and women in particular. That is the tragic challenge we faced during the year", he says.

According to him, positive and tangible national achievements should be shaped in a way that could build the future hopes of generations. In this case, all the peoples of Ethiopia are expected to stand for one another, stand together for constructive causes and against those, which threaten their unity and peace. "That is the only way we can achieve national reforms and surpass together".

Meanwhile, Tilahun stress that the dedications given to the days of Pagumiene must be deeply considered by the mass public because the themes are not merely words. "If today is dedicated as a day of "Reform for excellent" service, it doesn't mean to give excellent service today and forget it tomorrow. It is our homework that we should start doing today and continue during the New Year. Most of all it is a reminder that we should make reform for excellent service. This should be a core of our culture", he adds.

He also underlines that, while working on developmental activities ensuring peace and stability is also a major issue of concern that both the government and the public itself has to take seriously in order to surpass together.

During the transitional period between the passing and coming years, several cultural events have been taking place in different parts of the Country. The Buhe, Ahenda, Solel, Ashendiye etc were the famous ones. In addition to their religious and cultural values, their contribution to the development of art is significant. In this case, Tilahun strongly believes that people in the world of art are responsible in promoting their cultural values. He also notes that promoting tangible developmental achievements and pointing out the challenges through honest creative works of art is mandatory. "As a professional artist, I believe that artists should always be ahead of every socioeconomic and political activity. Negligence or ignorance cannot be characteristics of art. We should always play crucial role through our works of art and guide both government and public".

The unique thirteenth month Pagumiene of the 2016 has already started and today is dedicated for a day of reform for excellent service. Services from public to private sectors could be given with traditional trends. For the fact that excellent services have never been strongly promoted, the socioeconomic and political reforms in Ethiopia during the past regimes faced good governance problems. According to Tilahun, the reforms that have been witnessed during the past six years are manifestations of a good step towards an excellent service. "I have witnessed so



many things that used to be bad images of the City changed during the past few years. There are developments which the whole world is witnessing, and I can say that they are elements of our leaders' good start to excellent service."

As per Tilahun if one can witness a great deal of developmental achievement in such a short time, it is a must to learn from the executors of the projects and start a reform of one. It is not only the daily service they give on a routine trend people have to care about, but also being creative and bringing it to an excellent level, according to him.

Since the service sector is one of the leading sectors in the Ethiopian economy, reforms are mandatory to bring it to an excellent level. The reform for an excellent service is also homework for all Ethiopians who are awaiting the New Year with greater hopes. In this case, everyone is expected to start the reform from his/ herself. If changes need to positively address the people's quests all must work as one. "To expand the positive developments in Addis Ababa to other cities in the Country, ensuring peace is inevitable. To ensure peace, the people and government must work together", says Tilahun.

**"Reform for excellent" service, it doesn't mean to give excellent service today and forget it tomorrow. It is our homework that we should start doing today and continue during the New Year**

# Law & Politics

## Major inroads amidst a bevy of tribulations

BY DESTA GEBREHIWOT

The last six years have been accompanied both by great accomplishments and a bevy of trying challenges. The reform period has indeed been a make-or-break moment for the country marked by great strides and big calamities. Faced with backlogs of predicaments and recurrent problems, the country has been staying afloat and undertaking various initiatives.

Punctuated by conflicts and violence, including the devastating conflict in the northern and other parts of the country, the last reform years also saw headways in many frontiers.

Reversing the great danger facing the country before 2018, Ethiopia also took reform measures in many spheres from economy to diplomacy. Introducing Homegrown Economic Reform, the country has been reforming its economic policies moving into a more liberal market. In the sphere of diplomacy, the country has also been withstanding foreign pressure yet striking a balance between its relations with the East and West and North and South. From joining BRICS to gaining financial assistance from international financial institutions, the country walked a fine line in cumbersome global geopolitics.

The reform has revived the construction of the Abbay dam. And, the country persevered in the face of enemies and against all difficulties, from the signing of the sea access agreement between Ethiopia and Somaliland to the start of electricity generation from the third and fourth turbines of Ethiopia's Grand Renaissance Dam (GERD).

A new energy revolution for the nation is announced with the completion of the third and fourth turbines and the start of power generation. The massive dam's development faced numerous obstacles before reaching this point. The initiative has been subjected to persistent defamation and disinformation campaigns. But the last lap of the dam has been made feasible by the unshakable will of the incumbent and the dependence of the Ethiopian people both domestically and internationally. Millions will now be connected to the grid via the project.

Emerging peacefully from the devastating war in the northern part of the country, Ethiopia has made much greater strides toward maintaining peace and security, despite occasional chaos in some areas of the nation. The nation's security position and humanitarian conditions have improved significantly. There has already been some progress made toward stabilizing the situation, with the nation prepared to hold national discourse and transitional justice.

Another significant achievement is the groundbreaking agreement on sea access that Ethiopia and Somaliland have reached. With this historic agreement, cooperation



in the Horn of Africa saw a new start. The two countries' signing of a memorandum of understanding was also a significant development that paved the way for regional cooperation. Nevertheless, despite the signatories' resilience and unwavering resolve to carry out the agreement, there has been an alliance of internal and external forces to sabotage the cooperation since the signing. Ethiopia continues to lead the region toward economic unification despite continuous attempts to sabotage the course. Being an anchor state in the Horn of Africa, keeps a neutral and impartial stance in its dealings with the international world. In addition to being accepted into the BRICS group, the nation has been making waves internationally.

Speaking of the economy, the year has been marked by the vigorous implementation of "the Home Grown Economic Reform," and sweeping economic reform which aims to address the nation's economic problems with the active support of international financial institutions like the World Bank Group and the International Monetary Fund. On 29 July, the National Bank of Ethiopia bank introduced a floating exchange rate regime. The same day, the IMF Board approved an Extended Credit Facility (ECF) arrangement of about USD 3.4 billion, with a USD 1 billion immediate disbursement. Both global financial institutions announced pledge of USD 16.6 billion of funding over the next three years, including a USD 1 billion IDA grant and a USD 500 million concessional loan. These institutions attest to the country's correct economic direction, even though the adjustment made to foreign exchange rates has resulted in an immediate inflationary tendency.

This year, visibly Addis Ababa had the most extensive reconstruction and renovations ever, transforming the city into a contemporary, clean, and ecologically pleasant place to live. The corridor project

**This year, visibly Addis Ababa had the most extensive reconstruction and renovations ever, transforming the city into a contemporary, clean, and ecologically pleasant place to live**

has been completed one after the other giving the city a fine look. With vast green spaces, flowerbeds, and walkways for people to take walks or run during the early morning sports, the Corridor Development

Project has completely changed the city, turning it into an incredibly modern place. The project also contains CCTV cameras, which can aid in the fight against any illegal behavior, including infractions of traffic laws and occasionally coordinated band criminal operations.

The city now has a new look with extensive green areas and parks with fountains, with lanes for bicycles and wheelchairs for people with disabilities. Anyone who may have been away from the city for a few years would not recognize it, especially in certain quarters, and finally, residents were overjoyed by such transformation being grateful to the city administration which has been overseeing and conducting the project. People said finally Addis Ababa has the true posture of a deserved Capital of the African Continent where several international conferences are held regularly.

Similarly, several other projects have also been finalized or are in the process of being built. Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's "Dine for the Nation" campaign has been a huge success, as evidenced by the completion of tourist destinations like the Gorgora Project in the north, which is home to several tourist attractions. This one would add even more value to the collection of priceless tourist destinations. Other locations include the southern Halla Kella resort and the Lake of Wonchi, which is close to Addis. None of these accomplishments was without difficulty. There have been security issues in Amhara Oromia and other regions of the nation. Economic woes are still being caused by inflation, and the Horn region is about to experience further uncertainty. The nation faces enormous hurdles as a result of these internal and external problems. Once more, the aforementioned success stories demonstrate that the nation can overcome obstacles and achieve its goals with dedication and hard work.



# GERD symbolizes transformed Ethiopia from darkness to light

BY EPHREM ANDARGACHEW

*Prevention of climate change is the top priority of governments, international organizations, communities, and even individuals as it has become an imminent threat to their existence. The outcomes of climate change are knocking on the doors of everyone everywhere as they manifest themselves in the form of floods, drought, landslides, and other disasters.*

*One of the causes of climate change in all corners of the world is the production of nonrenewable energy from sources like fossil fuels which releases a significant amount of carbon into the atmosphere which in turn pollutes the air. Therefore, the world has reached a mutual understanding that it is a must to significantly decrease the utilization of nonrenewable or unclean sources of energy and transit to more sustainable, renewable sources of energy.*

*Due to its capacity to generate clean and renewable energy from sources like hydroelectric power, wind farms, solar panels, and geothermal energy Ethiopia is likely to contribute duly to the transition to clean energy at local and regional levels.*

*In order to get further insight on the nation's endeavor in ensuring clean energy transition, The Ethiopian Herald approached Dr. Eng. Habtamu Itefa who has been serving as Minister of Water and Energy of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Since October 2021. He got his first degree in 1999 and his second degree in 2006 in Irrigation Engineering both from Arba Minch University, Ethiopia. He got his PhD in Hydraulic Engineering from Stuttgart University, Germany in 2011.*

*He began his career as a practicing engineer at the Benishangul-Gumuz Regional Water Bureau and then joined the academic sphere where he lectured at Arba Minch University and later on at Addis Ababa Science and Technology University, respectively.*

*He also served in different leadership positions from school dean to University Vice President. He then went on to serve as Deputy Head of the Urban and Housing Bureau of the Oromia Regional State from 2016 to 2017; Director-General of the Oromia Regional State Road Authority from 2017 to 2019 and Head of the Oromia Regional State Water and Energy Resource Development Bureau from 2019 up until his present Ministerial appointment to lead the Ministry of Water and Energy of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. The Ethiopian Herald had a brief stay*

*During his interview with The Ethiopian Herald, Dr Eng. Habtamu has elaborated on the significance of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) for Ethiopian unity, development, downstream countries, and mitigating climate change.*

*Have a nice read*

**As we all know, the Great Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) is a project that began with several goals. So, what is the present state of the dam?**

The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) is a big hydropower project. Ethiopians see it as their showpiece project. The dam was built to utilize Ethiopia's plentiful resources, such as water. Its primary function is hydroelectric power generation. It is one of Africa's largest hydroelectric power plants. The dam is critical to Ethiopia's economic development since it increases access to energy, fosters industrial expansion, and promotes regional development.

The construction of the dam was meticulously planned to avoid causing considerable harm to downstream countries. It is also a necessary dam for environmental concerns, favorable influence on the Nile ecology, and water availability for agriculture in downstream nations. As of my last update, GERD is operating in stages. The retention of water and generation of electric power is now underway. This is the current state of GERD.

**As you are aware, the dam has been successfully filled with water and has begun to generate power. What effort has been made to raise the dam to this level? Specifically, what kind of**

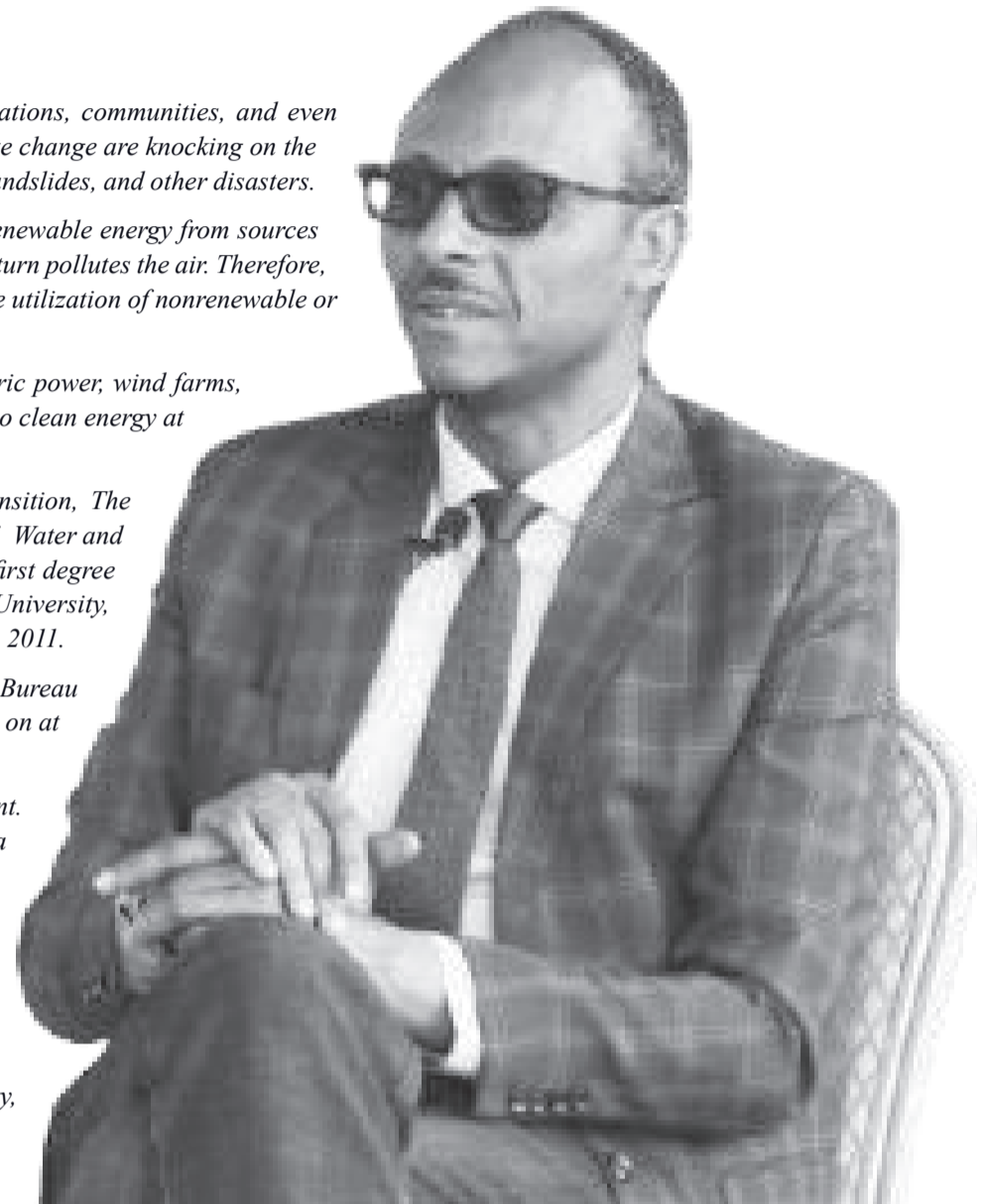
**difficulties were identified before and after the reformist government took power?**

GERD is Ethiopia's largest project. It was a project that the country's leaders had wanted to work on but had postponed for a variety of reasons, including lack of capacity. As a result, not only the leaders but the entire Ethiopian people regretted it. There was no unspoken verse, song, or saying that expressed their frustration. When the time came for the dam to be built, led by former Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, every Ethiopian enjoyed and actively participated in the construction of the dam to the greatest extent.

However, due to a serious project management problem, GERD had reached a stage where it could no longer be Ethiopia's renaissance project. Recognizing this, the reform government set the restoration of the Renaissance as its primary goal. Thus, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's decisive actions transformed the weaker GERD work into a successful work by following it uniquely, guiding it, and taking significant measures.

**You said GERD had faced problems during its construction time. What problems did it encounter? How was the issue resolved?**

Making the Renaissance Dam Renaissance is one of the things the reforming



**The dam is critical to Ethiopia's economic development since it increases access to energy, fosters industrial expansion, and promotes regional development**

government has accomplished. There are electromechanical and civil components to the dam which requires a great deal of expertise and understanding about this component. Nonetheless, a local company named METEC was awarded the electromechanical project by the previous administration. While it is commendable to offer local companies, such as METEC, an opportunity to work on construction, doing such a large-scale project as a nation was inappropriate. With what little money it had, the government gave priority to the construction of GERD as its first priority. Now, it reaches a stage where it generates power

**If the reformist government believed that giving inexperienced enterprises a chance was justified; change the contracts and project management, what results did you obtain?**

The construction of the dam work done is not an easy task. After changing the project management and contractors, concrete results are obtained. There has been a lot of diplomatic effort done. Besides, the dam's consecutive water filling has been completed successfully. So far, multiple turbines have been working and generating 1400 MW.

Currently, GERD retains 66.5 billion cubic meters of the 74 billion cubic

*Continued to page 9*



Continued from page 8



**The country's electricity supply is critical to creating job opportunities for youth. It opens up significant opportunities for industry to develop and replace imported items domestically. And the electricity supply is being designed to improve the lives of all citizens**

meters of water planned to be used to generate electricity. The country has now reached a point where the dam can keep the remaining 7.5 billion cubic meters of water. This outcome was not obtained easily. The dam's construction was accomplished thanks to Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's determined leadership and the ongoing support of the Ethiopian people, the diaspora, and so on. Many Ethiopians, particularly security forces, have been killed as a result of anti-peace groups and forces that oppose Ethiopia's growth and dam building. Furthermore, media organizations and citizens who care about Ethiopia make significant contributions to the construction of the GERD. Accordingly, the Renaissance Dam has reached a level where it is irreversible.

**Why is the GERD cited as an illustration of Ethiopia's period of transition? Why is it considered a representation of Ethiopian togetherness and unity?**

Ethiopia has a large amount of arable land, as well as human and natural resources, particularly water. Since the country's inception, numerous things have been planned to develop the country, nevertheless, many plans have failed owing

to a lack of concerted efforts, dedication, and strategic leadership. Things that have been considered for millennia but not implemented. However, the current government's move and dedication to development help the country to gain various results. That is why we refer to Ethiopia as being in transition. Besides, the present government's clear orientation promotes the prosperity of Ethiopians.

Among other things, the country's energy supply initiatives deserve recognition. The country's electricity supply is critical to creating job opportunities for youth. It opens up significant opportunities for industry to develop and replace imported items domestically. And the electricity supply is being designed to improve the lives of all citizens.

When we say that GERD is an expression of Ethiopian unity and solidarity, we mean that all Ethiopians embrace it, regardless of their differences. Although there are differences of opinion in the country on political and social concerns, the dam is a project that allows all citizens to have a shared understanding of their country's affairs. It also serves as an excellent teaching tool since GERD demonstrates

that if Ethiopians work together for our country's development, peace, and prosperity, we may achieve greater success by completing more Renaissance Dams, diverse megaprojects, and development works. It is also a project that sends a strong statement that Ethiopia's unity and growth cannot be easily disrupted. It is a project that demonstrates Ethiopians' ability to stick together and work toward a shared goal not only during times of crisis or conflict but also during times of development.

**Ethiopia stated that the dam is significant not just for Ethiopia, but also for the world ecology and downstream countries. What do you mean by "it won't hurt the downstream countries"? Is there any substantial influence on them since the dam began to retain water?**

GERD is a project that has benefited not just Ethiopians, but also other countries, particularly downstream countries. For example, Ethiopia is experiencing heavy rains this year. If there had been no GERD, we would have heard news or stories of disastrous floods in downstream nations, particularly Sudan. However, GERD actually lowered the population's susceptibility to floods.

In addition, the water discharged throughout the summer months provides downstream nations with consistent and sustainable water for agriculture. Ethiopia now releases four times more water from the dam during the summer than Sudan did get before GERD. Hence, more irrigation work will be possible. Besides, the considerable risk of floods has been reduced and prevented. And as of right now, neither the dam nor its effects are affecting them.

**What experiences do you think the nation gained from the construction of GERD?**

As you are aware, the dam is large and quite complex. As a result, we have been instructed not to build this dam. However, GERD fosters a sense of possibility when we work together to develop a sound

project such as the dam. It also instills hope in Ethiopians that their lives could be improved if they were together. The country has also gained the capacity to do activities such as renaissance. In terms of diplomacy, the country's negotiating capacity has become strong and growing. In general, GERD teaches us how to solve old-age developmental questions.

**Ethiopia's water resources are reported to have been underutilized for generations. Nonetheless, the nation's water resources are beginning to be utilized by the present government. So, what does it imply for Ethiopia to use other water resources in addition to the Nile?**

Looking back, Ethiopia did not use its water resources for many millennia. Because of this, we are well-known around for poverty, drought, and other problems. However, today the nation is able to produce and export summer wheat because of its water resources. It turned from being unable to use the nation's water resources to being able to use them by building GERD on the Nile River. In addition, the nation constructed and generated 1400 megawatts. As a result, the GERD's development has reached a point where the dam's water is available for tourism, fishing, and other uses. This indicates a lot of promise and inspiration are available for the future.

**What are the benefits of Ethiopian renewable energy generation from renewable sources in terms of climate change mitigation? What should the world community do to help Ethiopia's greenery efforts?**

Climate change is the biggest challenge to the world right now. It is caused by things that are mostly human. Energy generating is among those that contribute to climate change. Climate change occurs not by developing countries but also in the great contribution of developed and industrialized nations. In particular, Ethiopia is planting and caring for a billion saplings every year through the Green Legacy Initiative program. Realizing this, the international community should support and help Ethiopia.

Climate change is the world's most pressing concern right now. It is caused mostly by human activities. Energy generation is one of the factors contributing to climate change. Climate change is caused not just by poor countries, but also by the large contributions of rich and industrialized nations. Unlike other countries, Ethiopia puts a clear direction not only to avoid pollution but also to clean up the polluted climate via green legacy initiatives. Every year, Ethiopia through the Green Legacy Initiative program plants and cares for a billion seedlings. Recognizing this, the international community should assist and support Ethiopia.

*Thank you very much for your time and collaboration!*

*You're most welcome!*

# Society

## Serving with uprightness, to build a strong country

BY LEULSEGED WORKU

As Ethiopia is striving to promote sustained economic prosperity and solidify its standing as a rising power in the Horn of Africa, the role of civil servants cannot be undermined. Seeing their role in the country's overall development through translating policy decisions into action, delivering high-quality and fair service to the general public, the government is actively engaging to equip them with proper technologies and capacity-building training.

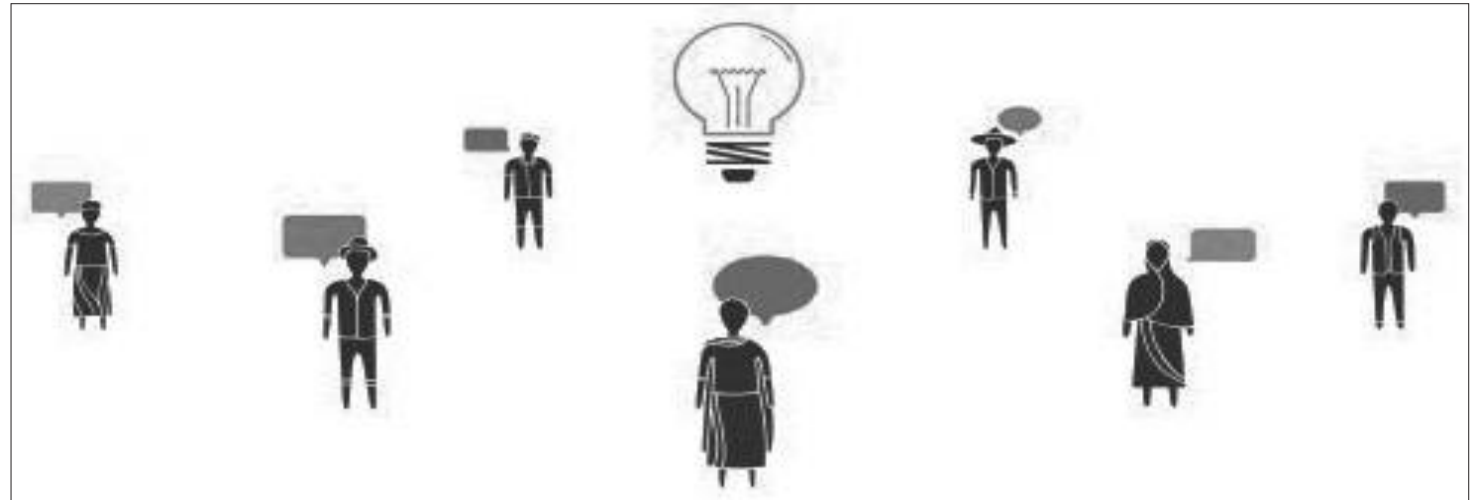
This aggressive intervention of the government in the public sector is bearing fruit. Several public sectors are delivering services to customers diligently though there are a lot of assignments ahead. Using this as a ground, *The Ethiopian Herald* interviewed some civil servants and leaders to what extent the government's ambitious plan hit its target and the employees have kept their promises in terms of translating the reform into reality.

Asrat Legese is the Public Service Bureau Head at Arada Sub City. When asked to what extent sub-cities are discharging their responsibilities to meet the standards of the reform and what roles the public servants should play to improve customers' satisfaction, he said that the Sub City has accomplished several tasks that have a significant role not only to the Sub-City but also to the City Administration. According to him, the City Administration has taken several steps to serve the public with dedication and integrity.

"The reform initiative taken by the government is bearing fruits. As part and parcel of the system, the City Administration and its branch administration offices are discharging their responsibility by equipping the civil servants with the right skills and ethical values to serve the public. This is especially true during the reform years and all administration units are exercising it. The reform includes producing efficient public servants who can deliver quality, effective, and speedy services. To this end, employees were employed transparently through examination. Those public servants who took the examination also took capacity-building training to ensure the reform. Those who cannot pass the exam were also assigned to equivalent positions by their performances."

He also indicated that the reform has brought tangible results in various sectors by providing services via technologies, generating civil servants who can discharge their responsibility honestly and provide services the whole weekdays and in some special cases, even on the weekends.

According to the Head, the proper application of technologies in rendering services has eased the previous traditional business-as-usual system where customers were expected to get services in person which consumes their time. Because of the reform, they can now easily access services



**"These disciplined civil servants always give priorities to customers. That is why it is common to see some civil servants engaging in duties even on the weekends and evening times."**

and information online. Housing, trade and construction, and other sub-sectors are serving their customers using digital technologies. "Regarding service providers, the City Administration has tried its level best to create a conducive environment and sub-cities are provided with all the necessary materials which are essential to render efficient services to meet customers' satisfaction."

Creating morally responsible civil servants is one area that the City Administration has given due attention to. In this regard, Arada Sub-City has witnessed effective and morally responsible civil servants who value the basic principles of public service. "These disciplined civil servants always give priorities to customers. That is why it is common to see some civil servants engaging in duties even on the weekends and evening times."

Asrat said that the government is aggressively working to meet the interests of the general public. Service-giving institutions and public servants have the responsibility to ensure that. Whenever public servants provide efficient and effective services to the public diligently, it is possible to sustain the reform and ensure Ethiopia's prosperity.

When asked to what extent the leadership is discharging its responsibilities to avoid public grievances; Asrat said that leaders



and other coordinators are working hand in glove to meet customers' interests. However, it does not mean that all the customers coming to the Sub-City seeking services will be satisfied with the services they received. For this reason, the Sub-City has an office that handles customers' grievances and complaints. What is more, using the Civil Service Policy which is being practiced across the country, the City Administration strives to provide speedy and fair services to the community.

According to him, if any public servants do not adhere to the principles of the reform and creates trouble for service seekers, they will be held accountable for their actions. There are monitoring mechanisms to check whether a service provider is discharging his/her responsibility accordingly or not.

In a related development, at a forum held recently at North Wollo Zone, Amhara State under the theme "Man-centered service for building a strong nation", the contribution of civil servants to nation-building was emphasized.

Berhanu Zemaw, an employee at Semien Wollo Zone Agriculture Department and participant in the forum told ENA that proper utilization of agricultural inputs and technologies has a key role in boosting production and productivity. In this regard, as a responsible civil servant, he will exert the utmost energy to deliver the needed support to the sector's actors by fighting all forms of bad governance to ensure customers' satisfaction.

Reflecting the view of Berhanu, Suleman Yusuf an employee at Semien Wollo Transport Bureau, also reaffirmed the

need to serve society fairly and properly. According to him, the transport sector is one of the areas where several gaps are witnessed. In this regard, proper utilization of technologies along with commitment will address the problem; which at the end of the day keeps the country at the highest level.

Speaking on his part, Zone Head Aragie Yemer said that the active engagement of both the managerial circle and other subordinate bodies helps to attain the expected results-to maximize the customers' satisfaction. In this regard, the civil servants are expected to render speedy and fair service to the public

According to participants, as the nation advances toward economic prosperity, civil servants are duty-bound to serve the masses honestly adhering to the public service policy and ensuring successful implementation of the reform. Participants have also affirmed that through effective utilization of technologies, they will contribute their share for the effectiveness of the reform. Zone's civil servants confirmed their readiness to fill all gaps in service provision and discharge their responsibility.

Proper service rendering in public sectors enhances economic growth, promotes social equity, and strengthens governance-cornerstones of a prosperous Ethiopia. In this regard, while marking "Service Day" it is also important to consider meeting the needs of civil servants who serve as a bridge between the government and the masses. This is due to proper investment in civil servants and ensuring their well-being can pave the way toward a brighter and more prosperous future for its citizens.

# International news

## Zimbabwean agricultural leader becomes Africa's food champion of the year

BY ZEKARIAS WOLDEMARIAM

**KIGALI, RWANDA** -- Tinotenda Mhiko, CEO of the Agricultural and Rural Development Authority (ARDA) of Zimbabwe, has been named the winner of the 2024 Africa Food Prize, according to a Press Release obtained from Ascent Group of Kenya.

The release indicated that Mhiko has received a \$100,000 award for his groundbreaking leadership and innovation in advancing food security through strategic irrigation initiatives, which is revolutionizing Zimbabwe's food systems.

Mhiko's visionary leadership at ARDA has been a driving force in overcoming some of Zimbabwe's most pressing agricultural challenges, such as recurrent droughts, erratic rainfall, and widespread land degradation.

His bold and innovative strategies have expanded the area under irrigation from 6,000 hectares in 2016 to a projected 15,000 hectares by 2025, positioning ARDA as a model of sustainability and profitability in African agriculture. By upgrading irrigation infrastructure, integrating advanced technologies like drip irrigation and solar-powered systems, and diversifying crop production, Mhiko through ARDA has significantly improved water use efficiency, boosted crop yields, and strengthened resilience to climate change. These achievements have not only enhanced food security but also spurred economic



(L-R) Ibrahim Mayaki, AU Special Envoy on Food Systems, Tinotenda Mhiko CEO Agriculture and Rural Development Authority, Dr. Dorothy Okello Africa Food Prize Committee Member

development at a national level.

Under Mhiko's vision, ARDA has also cultivated a culture of collaboration and innovation, engaging stakeholders and building partnerships with government bodies, private sector players, and international development organizations. His work illustrates a holistic and adaptive approach to irrigation that addresses technical, economic, and environmental aspects, setting a benchmark for agricultural transformation in Zimbabwe and beyond.

The \$100,000 Africa Food Prize honors Africans who are spearheading transformative agricultural initiatives. It

highlights bold initiatives and technical innovations that can be replicated across the continent to foster a new era of food security and economic opportunity. This year's award not only celebrates individual excellence but also emphasizes the importance of collaborative efforts in addressing the multifaceted challenges facing Africa's food systems.

In his acceptance speech, Mr. Mhiko stated, "I have worked with all classes of farmers over 15 years to improve productivity. Over time I have found that the first step to achieving this is innovation. We have implemented impactful models alongside the

use of technological innovations which have helped achieve this."

The announcement was made by former Nigerian Prime Minister H.E. Ibrahim Mayaki during the 2024 Africa Food Systems Forum in Kigali, Rwanda. In his remarks, President Kikwete praised Mhiko for his exceptional contributions, stating, "This is an example of what transformative leadership looks like. Beyond the issues of science and innovation, there is a dimension of empowerment of farmers. You can see the impact of this vision in empowering farmers."

The Africa Food Prize recognizes groundbreaking work in agriculture and calls on governments, organizations, and individuals to support similar initiatives and invest in Africa's agricultural future. Each year, the prize seeks nominations for individuals or institutions that are leading efforts to transform farming in Africa, with an emphasis on poverty reduction, nutrition security, and job creation. Nominations are reviewed based on criteria assessing the impact, scalability, and sustainability of agricultural programs.

The Africa Food Prize is the preeminent annual award that recognizes outstanding individuals or institutions that are leading the effort to change the reality of farming in Africa.

Established in 2006, AGRA is an African-led and Africa-based institution dedicated to placing smallholder farmers at the core of the continent's burgeoning economy.

## Countdown begins to the fourth Intra-African Trade Fair (IATF2025) in Algiers

• IATF2025 will build on past successful editions in promoting trade and investment across Africa

BY ZEKARIAS WOLDEMARIAM

**ALGIERS, ALGERIA** – Over 35,000 visitors from more than 140 countries across the world are expected to converge in Algiers, Algeria from 4 – 10 September 2025 to attend the Intra-African Trade Fair 2025 (IATF2025), Africa's premier trade and investment event.

A Press Release distributed by Hudsonsandler.com disclosed that during the week-long fair, more than 2,000 exhibitors, including businesses from the African continent and globally, will be showcasing their goods and services to the visitors and buyers while exploring opportunities and exchanging information. This is projected to translate into over US\$44 billion in trade and investment deals.

Hosted by the Government of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria under the theme 'Gateway to New Opportunities', the week-long event offers a platform for boosting trade and investment. It aims to tap into opportunities from the single market of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) of over 1.4 billion people and a GDP of over US\$3.5 trillion.

The fair is held biennially by the African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank), in collaboration with the African Union and the AfCFTA Secretariat. The Chairman of

the Advisory Council of IATF and former President of Nigeria, H.E. Chief Olusegun Obasanjo said: "The IATF has distinguished itself as an instrument for promoting intra-African trade and investment by enabling businesses to interact and access trade and market information opportunities. Over \$100 billion in trade and investment deals have been closed cumulatively with over 70,000 visitors and more than 4,500 exhibitors participating in the last three editions of IATF. We welcome African businesses to tap into the opportunities to market, grow sales, expand to new markets and to exchange ideas with peers. We thank our host, Algeria, which is one of the continent's more advanced economies".

Heads of State and Governments, Ministers of Trade, Finance, Culture and other ministries as well as high profile business, small & medium enterprises and industry leaders are expected to attend IATF2025.

Chief Obasanjo added "IATF is the largest, holistic trade fair championing the continent's growth and development. It serves as a collaborative platform for driving shared aspirations for prosperity and stability, as envisioned by AfCFTA. It is a strong backbone for meaningful transformation of Africa and enhancing resilience by creating a gateway to new opportunities for economies and businesses through intra-African trade



Signing of the Hosting Agreement for Intra-African Trade Fair 2025

and investment.

Key activities lined up for IATF2025 include a trade exhibition by countries and businesses; the Creative Africa Nexus (CANEX) programme with a dedicated exhibition and summit covering fashion, music, film, arts and craft, sports, literature, gastronomy and culinary arts; a four-day Trade and Investment Forum featuring leading African and international speakers; and the Africa Automotive Show for auto manufacturers, assemblers, original equipment manufacturers and component suppliers.

There will be Special Days dedicated for countries as well as public and private entities to showcase trade and investment opportunities, and This item is classified as

Confidential tourism and cultural attractions, as well as IATF Diaspora Day which highlights commercial and cultural ties between Africa and its diaspora, featuring a Diaspora Summit, market and exhibition, cultural and gastronomic showcase.

Also planned is a business-to-business (B2B) and business-to-government (B2G) platform for matchmaking and business exchanges; the AU Youth Start-Up programme showcasing innovative ideas and prototypes; the Africa Research and Innovation Platform @IATF for university students, academia and national researchers to exhibit innovations; and the African Sub-Sovereign Governments Network to promote trade, investment, educational and cultural exchanges at the local level.

# Verbatim and Caption

## Ethiopia celebrating Pagumen days with national events

The Government of Ethiopia is celebrating the five days of “Pagumen” month (13th Ethiopia month), to celebrate the socio-economic and political achievements registered during the past sex reform years. Accordingly:

**Pagumen 1: Transition Day:** The day is celebrated to mark the national achievements and Ethiopia’s resilience.

**Pagumen 2: Reform Day.** To honor the wide-ranging reforms implemented since the reformist government came into power.

**Pagumen 3: Sovereignty Day.** The day Highlights achievements in safeguarding Ethiopia’s political and food sovereignty, including transformative successes in wheat production.

**Pagumen 4: Diversity Day:** The day focuses on celebrating Ethiopia’s social



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FDRE Government Communication Service

identity aiming at reinforcing unity and shared identity.

**Pagumen 5: Day of the Future:** will be celebrated focusing on nation-building efforts with future generations in mind under the theme “Today’s hard work for tomorrow’s legacy.”

Government Communication Service



### ENDC to finalize agenda collection phase by October: Chief Commissioner

The Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission (ENDC) is working towards wrapping up the agenda collection activities. The commission plans to complete its agenda collection phase by October, 2024.

The chapter of agenda collection discussions is set to conclude in October across the country. Following the conclusion of the agenda collection phase, fundamental agendas will be selected. These key agendas will then be discussed in the main National Dialogue forum.

Professor Mesfin Araya, Chief Commissioner, Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission



### AUF significant milestone in addressing continent’s urban challenges: Minister

The Africa Urban Forum (AUF) underway in Addis Ababa is marking a significant milestone in addressing the continent’s urban challenges and exploiting opportunities.

Our cities are undergoing a transformation from centers of poverty to symbols of prosperity. Our urban centers are increasingly focusing on climate resilience and green innovations.

The forum comes at a critical juncture as Africa experiences rapid urban growth, with cities expanding at an annual rate of 15 percent continent-wide, while Ethiopia’s urban growth stands at 5.4 percent.

Chaltu Sani, Minister, Ministry of Urban and Infrastructure of Ethiopia

### AUF vital platform to discuss strategies for modernizing cities: Addis Ababa Mayor

The First African Cities Sustainability Forum is an important a platform for African leaders to discuss strategies for modernizing cities and transforming into thriving centers of progress and prosperity. The forum will become a significant platform for African leaders to collaborate on shared challenges and opportunities.

Adanech Abiebie, Mayor, Addis Ababa City Administration.



### FOREX price gap with parallel market rate drops to 4% in month: NBE Governor

The foreign exchange market gap with parallel market price has significantly declined from 100 to four percent in a single month following the implementation of the macroeconomic reform policy.

NBE has launched a digital platform called united to seamlessly boost the remittance flow to the country. Similarly, Ethiopia also allows non-resident Ethiopians, persons of Ethiopian origin, and Ethiopian residents and not-for-profit organizations for receiving funds are eligible to open foreign currency accounts.

Mamo Mihretu, Governor, National Bank of Ethiopia (NBE)