



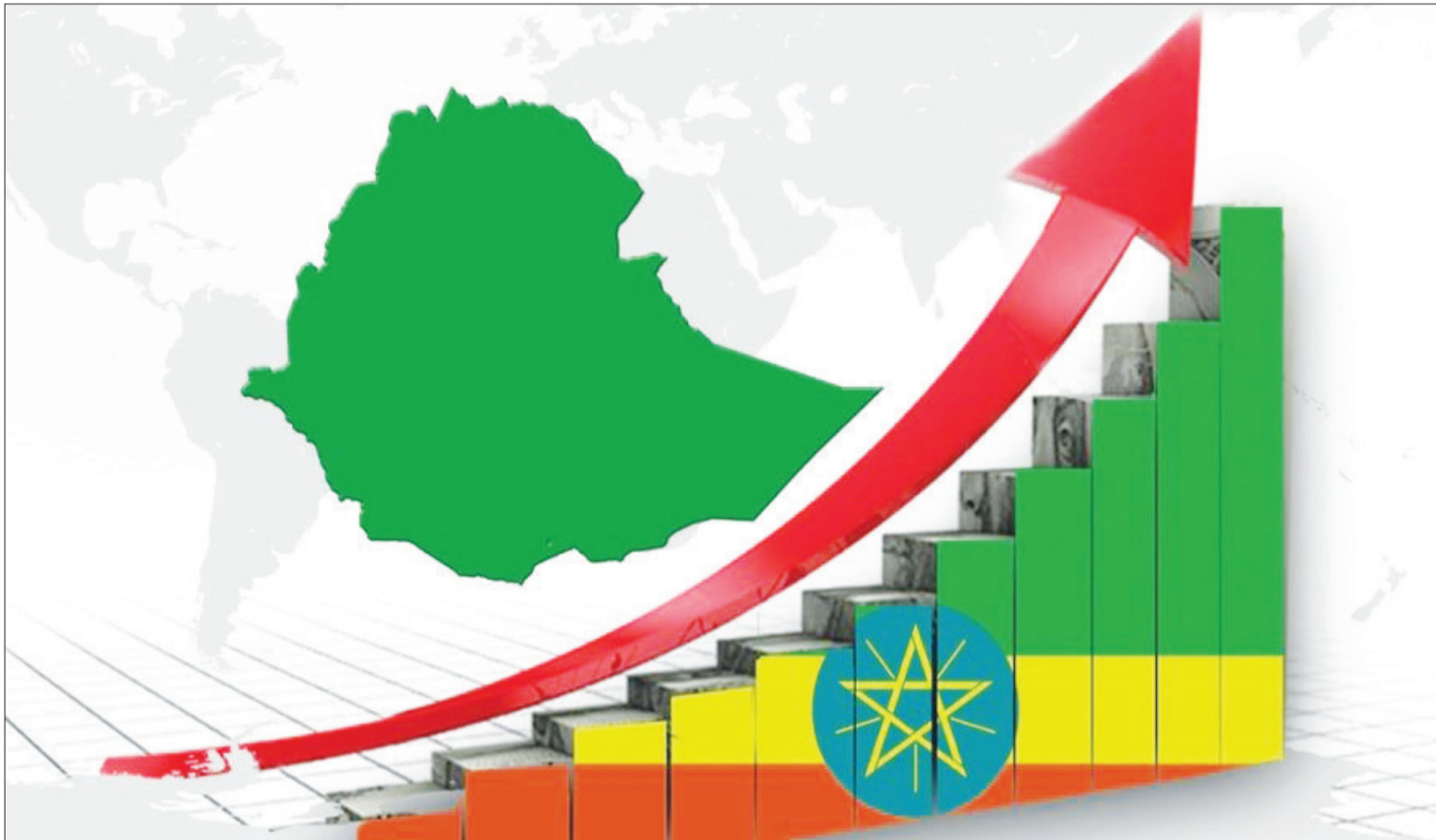
The Ethiopian Herald

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Oromia to host first-ever Irreechaa Expo here

BY MESERET BEHAILU
ADDIS ABABA -The Oromia State Culture and Tourism Bureau has announced its preparations for the first-ever “Irreechaa Expo 2024” at the Addis Ababa Bazar and Exhibition Center.

Briefing journalists yesterday, Oromia State Culture and Tourism Bureau Deputy Head, Derara Tuluma said the expo will take place from September 28 to October 4, 2024. Organized in collaboration with Hagere Event and Promotion, the event aims to showcase Oromia’s rich cultural heritage and provide a platform for economic growth.

Over 200,000 attendees and over 250 trade associations are expected to participate in the bazaar, while an estimated 10 million people are anticipated to join the Irreechaa celebration itself.

“The expo will provide opportunities for traditional clothing and jewelry manufacturers, banks, entrepreneurs, real estate developers, and other sectors to display their products and create economic opportunities,” said Derara.

Hagere Event and Promotion Head, Hawoni Eshetu, noted that the expo will also feature cultural

See Oromia to host... Page 3

Ethiopia’s economic journey: Navigating challenges, seizing opportunities

BY HAILE DEMEKE

Over the past decades, Ethiopia has seen steady economic growth despite facing internal and external challenges. However, the government’s Ten-Year Development Plan has struggled to meet key goals, including job creation and addressing the rising cost of living. Additionally, much of the government’s expenditure is financed by substantial loans from international financial institutions and development partners, leading to a growing national debt burden.

See Ethiopia’s economic... Page 3



Shewaferaw Shitahun



Costantinos Berhe (PhD)

Ethio-Djibouti corridor to boost investment inflows, competitiveness

• Joint corridor management authority on right track

BY ASHENAFI ANIMUT

ADDIS ABABA – Effectuating the Ethio-Djibouti Corridor Management Authority would have a great contribution on promoting the country’s investment inflows and enhancing competitiveness of export trade, Ministry of Transport and Logistics

See Ethio-Djibouti ... Page 3



Munsur Dessie

Ethiopia insists swift action on land degradation, desertification

Page 3

Photo: Dagne Abera

MoWSA finalizes gender inclusion directive preparation

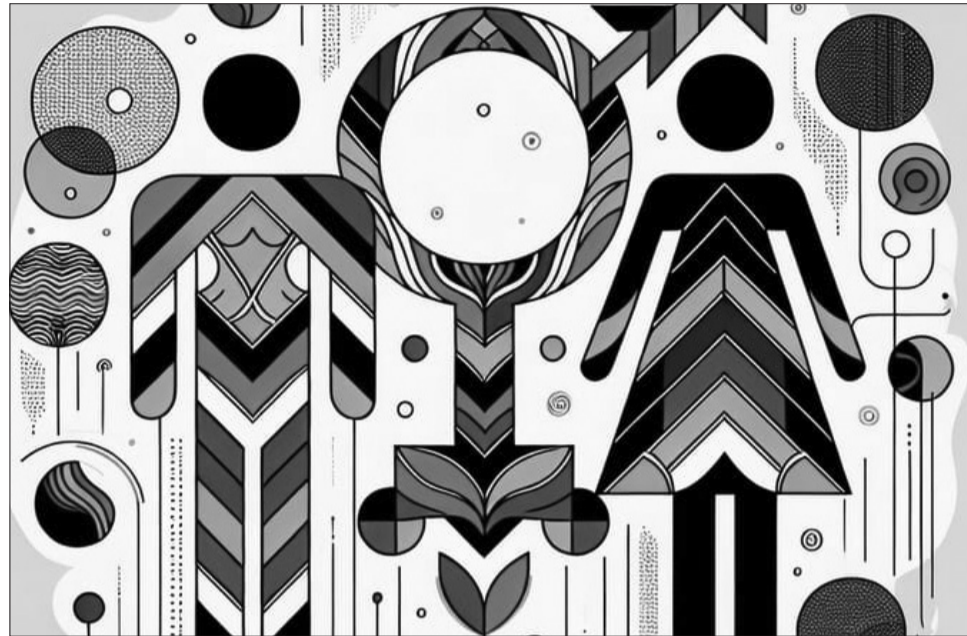
BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

ADDIS ABABA - The Ministry of Women and Social Affairs (MoWSA) said that it has finalized gender inclusion accountability directive preparation.

In an exclusive interview with *The Ethiopian Herald* MoWSA Inclusive Implementation and Monitoring Lead Executive Officer Ketema Legesse said that the Ministry has finalized the preparation of gender inclusion accountability directive that aimed to ensure accountability and responsibility of institutions in the future. A draft directive is sent to the Ministry of Justice for further evaluation.

Although the MoWSA has a responsibility to collect gender issue data, there is no system to effectively exercise gender inclusion. The approval of gender data accountability directive by House of Peoples Representative would contribute to ensure gender inclusion, resource mobilization, giving due emphasis for gender equality and others. It will also enable the implementation of gender data issues in a responsible manner, he said.

Furthermore, the directive would help to facilitate monitoring and evaluation activities regarding gender data since it is a key pillar in decision-making. Earlier, the



MoWSA generated the National Gender Information System database to collect gender issues into one database constantly from all states and other structures. The country can get aggregate gender data from the server. It is a base for policy makers, researchers and others, added.

Relevant institutions have a responsibility to prepare their plans and programs in a way ensuring gender inclusivity. It has been preparing a system of accountability to apply after approval of the directive, he added.

So far, the country has been facing challenges regarding lack of coordination from the key stakeholders, lack of disaggregated data, accountability, awareness, commitment and other gaps in gender issues. Currently, there are improved gender issues in institutions than before. They are including gender issues in their plans, reports, structures and others, he further noted.

He urged concerned stakeholders to carry out gender data collection activities as one of their day to day activities.

TSA instrumental to boost data accuracy, economic growth: MoPD

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

ADDIS ABABA -The Ministry of Planning and Development (MoPD) has announced that Ethiopia's Tourism Satellite Account (TSA) is a commendable step towards improving tourism data collection, enhancing experience, and fostering sustainable economic growth.

The ministry officially launched the national TSA on Tuesday.

Speaking at the event, MoPD State Minister Bereket Fesehatsion highlighted the significance of the TSA, calling it a major milestone in the effort to gather reliable, accurate, and comprehensive tourism data-an area that has posed challenges in the past. He added that the initiative is a key step towards improving data collection and analysis, enabling a better understanding of tourism expenditures.

"The government's reform agenda has redefined the tourism sector, emphasizing its potential to transform community livelihoods by expanding from traditional heritage tourism to include cultural and urban tourism, which have been identified in recent years," Bereket noted.

He emphasized that this approach aligns with Ethiopia's Homegrown Economic Reform and the Ten-Year Development Plan, which prioritizes five key sectors: agriculture, tourism, manufacturing, mining, and the digital economy. Among these, tourism has emerged as a national priority, gaining the attention and support it deserves.

The Ministry stated that the TSA will be crucial in integrating tourism data into national economic planning, ensuring that tourism's contributions are accurately reflected in the development strategy and in national income estimates. The TSA will enhance the accuracy of sectoral estimates, especially in services and trade.

"We are not only enhancing the tourism experience but also fostering sustainable economic growth. This strategy is pivotal for creating jobs, generating income for local communities, and raising living standards," Bereket added.

The TSA provides a scientific measure of tourism's impact on expenditure, GDP, and employment, allowing Ethiopia to assess the true value of this critical sector compared to others.

"TSA has several implications for our tourism sector and the broader economy," Bereket said. "It improves GDP measurement, facilitates international comparisons, assesses economic impacts, informs policy development, supports sustainable planning, and attracts investment."

The Ethiopian Statistics Services Director General Beker Shale (PhD) stated that tourism had been categorized as a service sector often overlooked for years. However, it has now been recognized as one of the five key contributors to national development, thanks to recent economic reforms and the increased attention from the Ethiopian government.

He further explained that tourism's contribution to the economy has significantly improved, despite missed opportunities in the past. "The future of this sector is promising, and economic transformation will be supported by the data generated by the TSA," Beker said.

The director general concluded by emphasizing that the TSA is a vital and reliable tool for measuring the sector's contribution to the national economy, where tourism's full potential has not yet been fully tapped. This initiative marks a significant step forward in analyzing the demand for crucial services linked to tourism activities and their interaction with other economic sectors.

Ethiopia Climbs Several Ranks In UN's E-Government Survey 2024

BY STAFF REPORTER

ADDIS ABABA - The latest edition of the United Nations E-Government Survey reveals that Ethiopia has made significant progress in its digital government landscape, moving up the rankings among UN member states.

The 2024 United Nations E-Government Survey 2024 was compiled by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations (UN DESA), through its Division for Public Institutions and Digital Government (DPIDG).

The United Nations E-Government Development Index (EGDI), which is released every two years, was unveiled yesterday in New York on the sidelines of the 79th UN General Assembly.

This global E-Government Development Index demonstrates the advancements made by countries in the digital sector and the changes they have achieved by comparing nations worldwide every two years, both in relation to other countries and in terms of their own progress.

According to the UN E-Government Survey 2024, Ethiopia has made significant progress, rising 10 ranks from its previous position within the landlocked developing countries (LLDCs) group.

This thirteenth edition of the United Nations E-Government Survey, released in 2024, provides a comprehensive assessment of the digital government landscape across all 193 Member States.



The 2024 Survey highlights a significant upward trend in the development of digital government worldwide, with increased investment in resilient infrastructure and cutting-edge technologies. The global average value of the E-Government Development Index (EGDI) shows substantial improvement, with the proportion of the population lagging in digital government development decreasing from 45.0 per cent in 2022 to 22.4 per cent in 2024.

Despite significant progress in digital government development, the EGDI averages for the African region, least developed countries, and Small Island Developing States remain below the global average, underscoring the need for targeted efforts to bridge existing gaps.

At the local level, the Survey continues to assess city portals using the Local Online Services Index (LOSI). The LOSI findings reflect steady progress but also highlight persistent disparities between national and local e-government performance, pointing to the need for focused initiatives to strengthen digital government at the municipal level.

This edition introduces the new Digital Government Model Framework, providing countries with a comprehensive road map for the effective planning, implementation and assessment of digital government initiatives. A short addendum explores the integration of AI in digital government development, emphasizing the importance of maximizing benefits and minimizing risks to achieve balanced governance.

Ethiopia insists swift action on land degradation, desertification

BY YESUF ENDRIS

ADDIS ABABA- As president of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN), Ethiopia has expressed urgent concern over increasing land degradation, desertification, and drought in Africa, calling for immediate action to implement international environmental agreements.

Speaking to local media yesterday, Munsur Dessie, Chief Executive of Environment and Climate Change Agreements and Strategic Partnerships at the Ministry of Planning and Development, emphasized Ethiopia's commitment to pushing the global community toward the full implementation of environmental accords.

Ethiopia received widespread recognition for its unilateral environmental initiatives during the Tenth AMCEN Ministerial Session held earlier this month in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire. However, Munsur stressed that the climate crisis requires not only local efforts but also regional and international cooperation.

Under Ethiopia's leadership, the Tenth AMCEN Session was held under the theme "Raising Africa's Ambition to Reduce Land Degradation, Desertification, and Drought." Munsur underscored Ethiopia's determination to encourage countries and organizations to implement environmental agreements throughout its AMCEN presidency, which will con-

clude next year when Ethiopia hands over the responsibility to another country.

The session, led by Ethiopia's State Minister of Planning and Development, Seyoum Mekonnen, highlighted Africa's critical need to restore its land resources.

According to the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), approximately 4.4 million hectares of productive land are lost to desertification annually, severely impacting food security for over 68 million people.

UNECA's latest report also revealed that around 65% of Africa's land is degraded, affecting more than 400 million people across the continent.

Ethio-Djibouti...

(MoTL) said.

During the recent meeting on Ethio-Djibouti Corridor Management Authority establishment, MoTL Minister Alemu Simie (PhD) highlighted that port agreement between the two countries would be a significant milestone to advance the entire port logistics services efficiency which would boost nation's overall economy.

In addition to importing commodities for manufacturing industry and agricultural inputs, the minister underscored that this corridor advancement would have a great positive impact on expediting export volumes and global market competitiveness.

Over 95% of Ethiopia's import-export trade is mainly carried out through the Ethio-Djibouti corridor, it was learnt.

So far, the two countries have been convening chains of discussions to establish common management in a bid to modernize the port service delivery.

Recognizing the overall significance of establishing the corridor authority, various development partners have supported the corridor development to improve regional connectivity and logistics efficiency and inclusive growth and regional integration.

Djibouti Trade and Tourism Minister Alidawud Abdu on his part stated that the two countries have been engaging in bilateral cooperation in many areas such as logistics, trade and other notable services through their bilateral commission.

In line with this advanced corridor partnership, Alidawud said that, "We have to diversify our port accessibility and competitiveness in all sectors in East Africa and across the continent."

It is also indicated that this corridor project is highly believed to enhance regional integration and generate spillover benefits for the entire community and region in general.



Oromia to host ...

exhibitions, including workshops, children's entertainment, and performances of traditional music and dance and the display of traditional dresses, foods and drinks. These activities aim to promote culture, tourism, and unity, enhancing the positive image of the Oromia State.

Irreechaa, a major Oromo thanksgiving festival, marks the beginning of the Ethiopian New Year, celebrated after the end of the rainy season. It is a time for the Oromo people to express gratitude to their God for peace and prosperity.

Ethiopia's economic...

Ethiopia's export sector, primarily dependent on agriculture, has not met expectations, resulting in a foreign currency shortage and a significant trade deficit. While the government has aimed to boost exports, especially in agriculture, the desired outcomes have yet to materialize. The government's efforts to increase foreign currency reserves through improved exports has faced obstacles, and gaps in the provision of social services and infrastructure remain key challenges.

In an interview with the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA), Public Policy Advisor Professor at Addis Ababa University, Costantinos Berhe (PhD), said that despite these challenges, Ethiopia has made significant infrastructure improvements, such as the construction of 200,000

kilometers of roads and energy projects like the iconic Abbay Dam. In addition, Gilgel Gibe and Koysha dams have been constructed to meet the growing demand for energy that is further intensified by the rapid population growth and industrialization.

Costantinos noted that the agricultural sector has made significant strides, particularly with the introduction of wheat cluster farming, aimed at increasing productivity and reducing wheat imports to enhance food security. To ensure inclusive economic growth, the scholar emphasized the need for the government to revise existing policies and introduce new directives. He also stressed the importance of enforcing the rule of law and ensuring that policies are properly implemented to

achieve the envisioned economic goals.

The academician further emphasized the crucial role of public officials and executives in supporting Ethiopia's path toward prosperity, urging them to be committed to their roles and work alongside the government. Additionally, he underscored the importance of collaboration with non-governmental organizations, cooperative unions, trade unions, and other societal groups to ease the path toward achieving the targeted economic growth.

Political and Economic Analyst Shewaferaw Shitahun echoed these sentiments, stating that Ethiopia, with its favorable climate and abundant human resources, has the potential to build a strong economy and ensure food security.

He pointed to the success of modern agricultural technologies, such as cluster farming, in helping the country realize its economic development goals. The analyst also called for the government to amend land policies, introduce more modern farming systems, and engage closely with investors to drive economic progress.

Moreover, the government is actively expanding Ethiopia's tourism destinations by constructing new sites, contributing to income generation and economic growth. These tourism projects play a significant role in creating job opportunities and alleviating the high cost of living. Above all, both analysts emphasized the need for the government to prioritize the rule of law, peace, and stability, which are essential to ensuring inclusive economic development.

Opinion

Proxy wars in Africa, adverse consequences

BY GETACHEW MINAS

In the past decade, some of the coup d'états in Africa have been undertaken in its Western part, a region well known for its tendency towards military mutiny and rebellion. These military mutinies have deposed the heads of states and presidents just to be replaced by military leaders.

Historians have recorded that only in 2021; there were six coup attempts out of which four were successful. The causes of these increases and upsurges may be found in the instability of the region that has extended across the sub-region. The question of legitimacy linked to many of the elected leaders has become a reason for mutiny. Thus, electoral accessions to power have been vigorously questioned, rejected, and disclaimed by the electorate in many West African countries.

Lack of security, as noted by Aly Tounkaram, is "fertile ground" for coups, as does the "lack of integrity of leaders". The long security crises across West Africa have led to the subordination of growth and development goals to security issues. The experience of these countries revealed that both economic growth and delivery of security have failed. The effect of such failure has engendered social and economic unrest in the sub-region.

As would be expected, internal conflicts in African countries, including Ethiopia, have unlocked the door to alien forces meddling, particularly from the superpowers. The historical role of the colonial masters as guarantors of security across West Africa has been openly challenged in the former colonial countries. The former colonial powers had an old habit of intrusive political, economic, and military action taken against their former colonies. Also, they impose the use of their currency that critics consider as a vestige of colonialism. The former colonial powers argue that they maintained the use of their currency on former colonies solely to assist them.

Recently, many countries in the sub-region of Africa have decided to bring to an end their military ties with their former colonial masters. They have demanded the colonial troops to leave their countries. Some countries have developed anti-colonial sentiment since their military dethroned their former leaders and took power by force. There have been a series of anti-colonial protests, with demonstrators condemning their former exploiters.

Following military coups, former colonial troops have withdrawn from their former colonies. The military juntas have revoked military cooperation agreements with former colonial masters. In the past, they had developed "local collective security" initiative to intervene where problems arise. Currently, the region looks for different external players to resolve its issues. Experts have noted that several foreign countries were conducting military

operations on African soil.

Both the Eastern and Western powers have established their military bases along the borders of the Horn of Africa. This has made the region exposed to future proxy wars to be conducted by the superpowers. The big powers have large military establishments in some African states, advancing their security interests through providing training to these countries. These powers also conduct special military operations, including the gathering of intelligence and counterterrorism activities in the continent.

Former colonial powers have well-established military presences in their former colonies. At the same time, non-colonial powers have been expanding across the Sahel in Africa. These powers are trying to intervene in the unoccupied non-colonial countries such as Ethiopia. The withdrawal of former colonial powers leaves an open space that is being filled by the mercenary group, led by the superpowers.

Wherever there is a political crisis or coup in Africa, the "mercenary groups" pushed their paramilitary forces as the solution to security crisis. These groups declared that their fighters are able to restore peace, law and order by eliminating terrorists. They are proud of preventing terrorists from hurting the civilian population in Africa.

According to the former conflict-monitoring group that traces political conflicts and violence, the Wagner Group, a mercenary force, is entrenched across Central and West Africa. In these regions the group has been training local militias. It has also propped up fragile governments allied with the superpowers in exchange for profitable mineral exploration rights. Some research institutes reported that the group had also sent mercenary forces to the Middle Eastern countries. The superpowers have used this force to take advantage of lack of stability and security in Africa.

Reports by international research institutes reveal the extent to which superpowers exploit political vacuums created in Africa. Usually some powers withdraw from an African country infested with all kinds of political, economic and social problems. However, another power waiting for such an opportunity quickly sends its weapons and mercenary groups into that country. Before withdrawing, the former power used its strong political and military influence in the African country for decades.

The relationship between the former colonial power and the so-called independent African country failed to help in making progress in terms of stability, security and economic development. One superpower exploits the withdrawal of the other, at a time when armed terrorist remained dangerously active and threatened their former colonizer. The so-called armed terrorists are actually local fighters who are driven by the desire to be fully independent from the residual colonial intruders.

One superpower replaces another with ferocious, vicious and violent means. The replacing power initially assists the current African government to consolidate and prevent rebel groups from entrenching their control. In an opportunistic move, the external mercenary group begins to assist the weak government.

The non-colonial power fully exploits the failures of the former power. The mercenary group, therefore, acts as the most important proxy in some African countries. It provides security for weak African governments, facilitating the political and diplomatic influence of the superpower. In so doing, it gains access to lucrative mining assets, industrial firms, and agricultural enterprises developed by the former colonial power. According to the international report, the new power takes advantage of all economic opportunities in the country that used to be exploited by the former colonial power.

The new power has embraced the military regimes in African countries by providing them with security assistance, diplomatic backing, and military strategies. It sends advisors that provide information in advance for preventing military coups in these countries. It also provides the friendly country with a group of mercenaries to combat local opposition groups and fighters. The new power also delivers arms shipments to the mercenaries under its pay.

In the process, the security situation may continue to deteriorate, with the insurgency spreading in some parts of the African countries. These blatant external forces become challenges to the other superpowers entrenching their dominance in Africa. This military confrontation is accompanied by trade wars between these powers. These powers compete for precious rare earth minerals in the African countries, including Ethiopia. These powers have been using debt obligations as a "tool of soft power" on these African nations.

These nations have become a focus of attention for mineral exploration and exploitation by the superpowers. They are endowed with large mines of diamonds, gold, iron ore, bauxite, phosphate, and uranium. When these governments are challenged by domestic armed groups, the superpowers instigate or play a major role in supporting and directing a party to a conflict. These powers support the party that would maintain their long-term economic interests in the poor but endowed with rich natural resources. Their support is not visible, as they are not directly involved in the actual fighting. Thus, the local groups conduct the fighting, which is "proxy warfare" inside Africa. This strategy has helped major powers fulfill some of their exploitative economic objectives. However, the proxies themselves achieve their objectives rarely, except bloodshedding their own kind.

A former western leader called these proxy wars "the cheapest insurance in the

world." This statement truly reflects the limited political risks and human costs for western sponsors of the wars. But these conflicts, skirmishes, clashes and quarrels are tremendously costly for the naturally wealthy African countries in which they occur. During the cold war (1947-1991), central, eastern and southern African countries served as fertile grounds for proxy wars. The superpowers found it necessary to expand their spheres of influence. They have done this largely by promoting leadership in the African countries that would be sympathetic to their political and economic interests. West and East African countries, including Ethiopia have all been centers of proxy war during the cold war period. Using both diplomatic and military powers, the superpowers delineate areas that could be used as strategic military grounds.

As a result of these conflicts, several nations in Africa were economically, politically, and socially destabilized. Due to pervasive issues arising from these conflicts, the countries involved have retained to this day the painful legacy of the Cold War. Some of the coups in Africa reflected the possibility of proxy war into prominence.

Some African countries have been under pressure from the superpowers to act belliciously in other neighboring African countries. Proxy wars have been prolonging insecurity and hooking countries into long-lasting poverty despite their endowment of rich natural resources. Also, they drained the limited foreign exchange reserves in these countries. These reserves have been shrinking fast, reversing the democratic gains. These have been accompanied by the resurgence of military coups. International research institutes have revealed that military spending in Africa exceeded billions of dollars.

Defense expenditures accounted for a certain percent of government spending across Africa. This share is believed to be higher in countries infested with conflicts. The military spending has been continuously rising in the past decades in those countries, including Ethiopia, that are fighting terrorist groups. The fight is widespread in desperately poor countries stretching across the continent. As these countries slide towards proxy warfare, the African region requires stronger "collective security" to prevent and avoid sliding into a painful era of fighting great power proxy wars.

The big powers avoid confronting each other directly. Instead, they provide poor African countries with weapons for fighting proxy wars. The poor countries would be forced into destructive warfare that reflects the interests of superpowers. It is believed that wise African leaders, including Ethiopian politicians, have kept the proxy war at bay as it mercilessly devours the poor people.

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

Editorial

Tourism thrives on collaboration to accelerate economic growth

Unlocking the IGAD Region's Tourism Potential: A Pathway to Cultural Richness and Economic Growth

Although beset by recurrent conflicts, violence that attracts big media coverage, the IGAD region is a prime destination for global travellers. From the breathtaking landscapes of Ethiopian highlands to the mesmerizing wildlife of Kenya and Uganda attract the attention of global tourists. The blend of natural beauty and rich cultural heritage positions also put the region in the top list of tourist menus.

The region is a mosaic of cultures, languages, and traditions, with each country offering a unique narrative. Ethiopia, the cradle of humankind, hosts historical sites such as the ancient Lalibela rock-hewn churches, the Simien Mountains and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Sudan boasts a treasure trove of archaeological sites, including the Nubian pyramids, while South Sudan's untouched landscapes appeal to the adventurous spirit.

Bolstering regional cooperation will bring lofty dividends to the entire region by promoting efficiency and filling gaps among the member states. Over the years, Ethiopia has been taking the leading role in rallying the region behind collective goals. In terms of tourism potential, Ethiopia is a towering figure with must-see natural and man-made heritages. The country is home to rich tangible and intangible heritages, these potentials, coupled with the country's mammoth influence in the region, place it to rally the member states to work together and unlock the region's tourism potential.

To effectively promote tourism, significant investment in infrastructure is crucial. Improved transportation networks, such as roadways and airports, are essential to enhance connectivity between key tourist attractions. Besides, identifying the potential and evaluating the sector's performance is vital to promoting the smokeless industry. Introducing new systems and technology helps the region harness its untapped tourism potential.

This week, Ethiopia has launched the first Tourism Satellite Account (TSA), which is vital to transform the tourism industry and gauge its contribution to the national economy. TSA can solve the lack of organized information in tourism so that the sector provides smooth services and comprehensive information, thereby contributing a quantifiable share to the national economy.

The satellite account helps to utilize the economic potential of the tourism sector for GDP contribution, job creation, and investment attraction by providing crucial data for evidence based policy formulation, decision-making and strategic planning.

Promoting this rich cultural and natural diversity requires a strategic approach. It is reported that the Intergovernmental Authority on Development's Sustainable Tourism Master Plan (STMP) 2024-2034, designed to foster sustainable development in tourism across the Horn of Africa region, is also expected to be officially launched shortly.

Promoting tourism in a region is not merely an economic initiative; it is a pathway to culture, awareness, and understanding. The IGAD region has all it takes to be a leading global tourism destination, and an effective implementation initiative like the master plan is vital to fully unlocking the rich and precious tourism potential.

The IGAD member states must work together to promote regional integration in tourism, simplifying cross-border travel regulations and creating joint marketing strategies. Together, they can position the region as a singular, multifaceted tourist destination, presenting packages that include experiences across several countries. Joint initiatives could cover everything from shared wildlife safaris to cultural festivals that celebrate the rich tapestry of the region. Strategic alliances with international tourism organizations, airlines, and travel agencies can enhance visibility in the international market, helping to attract a steady flow of visitors.

Opinion

Casing industrial production needs allied to sovereignty

BY GIRMACHEW GASHAW

Ethiopia has been focusing on the development of its industrial sector, despite facing challenges. The government has primarily focused on agriculture, tourism, and ICT, with the aim of increasing the sector's share in the total national product and attracting foreign investment. The country's policy aims to cover at least 80% of industrial needs with domestic production, increasing the sector's share of the domestic economy to 60%.

The new industrial policy encourages substitute products by changing the focus from commodity products to substitute products. Ninety-six industrial products have been identified in the strategy of proxy production, including food and beverage, cloth and clothing, leather, chemicals, construction materials, metal, and engineering.

Ethiopia has successfully replaced imported malt, pasta, buckwheat, edible oils, and fruit juices with local products at a high rate. This has led to more sustainable competitiveness in the economic sector and improved the country's overall economic growth.

The agriculture sector contributes to the country's economy, but only 15% of the total national product. The policy aims to increase its share by attracting foreign investment and encouraging domestic and foreign investment. Currently, 40% of industrial production needs can be covered by domestic capacity, making the country dependent on foreign imports.

A ten-year plan aims to cover at least 80% of industrial needs with domestic production, increasing the sector's share to 60%. The new industrial policy encourages substitute products, with a number of industrial products identified, including food and beverage, clothing, leather, chemicals, construction materials, metal, and engineering. This has led to the replacement of imported malt, pasta, buckwheat, edible oils, and fruit juices with local products.

The country has successfully replaced imported malt with local products, including pasta, buckwheat, edible oils, fruit juices, and rich foods. Clothing, footwear, and chemical production have also been expanded. The 2016 plan to save \$2.31 billion was achieved, with food and beverage products being the largest sector. Other sectors like chemical, manufacturing, technology, leather, and clothing have also seen significant savings.

Ethiopia has started a joint plan with the Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Trade and Regional Cooperation, and industrial owners to address issues related to horned cattle production. Clothing and textiles have been the first sectors to be involved, covering 100% of the replacement of student and military uniforms in the country.

Other sectors include paper wood products, medical bandages, jeans shoe soles, and various leather products. However, there is still much work to be done in leather production, particularly in preserving the skin of horned cattle. The Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Trade and Regional Cooperation, and industrial owners are working together to address these issues and ensure sustainability in the country's economy.

The Ethiopian government has been focusing on recording proxy product activity results, but there is a gap in using domestic production. To bridge this, the government has directed institutions to prioritize domestic production. The ten-year plan aims to earn \$9 billion from exports, but most of the income comes from industrial production, mainly agricultural. Industries are working on quality and expanding access to foreign markets.

The Let Ethiopian Produce Movement has increased investment in the productive sector, with 1,119 investors entering this year. The government has also implemented measures to increase capital flow, providing 6.3 billion birr to small and medium enterprises and 54.3 billion birr to large industries. However, the current production capacity is not sufficient, and further attention is needed.

The Ethiopian government has made efforts to improve the quality and quantity of inputs, reduce tariff pressure, and support local investors. A result-oriented incentive system has been implemented, allowing domestic investors to enter and work in industrial parks.

Small and medium enterprises have seen a significant increase in establishment, with 3,262 new enterprises established in the country last Ethiopian year. The country's largest industries are not more than two thousand. The Ministry of Industry has divided industries into three categories: those that can return to work with support, those that require replacement of spare parts, and those that have been completely destroyed.

The new decree allocates up to 100 million birr to medium industries, requiring significant preparation for production and sales space. The Ministry of Industry has divided industries into three categories: supportable, spare parts, and complete destruction.

Ethiopia has seen 392 industries start working, with some ready to export to foreign markets. Investors have requested extended loan repayment periods and tax-free privileges, and the government supports these efforts. In the Amhara region, those who stopped working due to conflict are being brought back to work. Quality control activities are being carried out for imported products, especially food and food-related products, to ensure their safety and health.

Government procurement institutions are urged to use local produce, but there is still work to be done to change attitudes. Ethiopia's micro and small enterprises sector has shown encouraging results, creating employment opportunities for graduates and graduates from higher education institutions. Over 800,000 jobs were created in the completed Ethiopian fiscal year, with over 11,000 new enterprises planned for the manufacturing industry.

Skilled manpower is also being provided to the manufacturing industry, with 28,000 practically trained students joining after graduation. The goal is to reliably increase the share of graduates in the workforce.

In short, the Ethiopian government is on the right track to change the destiny of the country by providing special emphasis on the agriculture and industry sector and substituting imports. This is a commendable effort that should be sustained for the common good of the country.

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



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Business & Economy

Industrial parks development: The ladder to reach the helm of success

BY ABEBE WOLDEGIORGIS

The government's ten-year perspective development plan clearly stipulates that it is impossible to attain structural economic change without expanding industrialization and to that end, due attention is rendered to the expansion of the manufacturing sector.

As it is obviously understood, Ethiopia is an agrarian economy where about 80% of the labor force is engaged in subsistence farming. Though agriculture has been practiced for millennia in Ethiopia, the sector still uses traditional tools for plowing and uses less modern inputs such as fertilizer, pesticides, and herbicides, which results in less output. The rain fed nature of the sector also makes it vulnerable to extreme climate conditions with disastrous consequences. Hence, along with modernizing the sector, shifting the excess labor stranded there to the non-farming sectors such as manufacturing and services has been taken as a way out for attaining structural change.

Recently, on one occasion, the Minister of Planning and Development, Fitsum Assefa (PhD), announced that the government emphasizes the expansion of manufacturing. As to her, it attracts foreign investment, creates job opportunities for thousands, creates linkage with agriculture through consuming raw materials and providing agricultural inputs, supports import substitution schemes, boosts exports, and helps innovation and entrepreneurship skills. Moreover, it accelerates the structural change. The sector also uplifts the nation's economy from low production and productivity to a higher level.

Cognizant of the value of the sector, the government established the Industrial Parks' Development Corporation (IPDC) and has constructed 13 industrial parks in various parts of the country so far, of which many of them have been operational.

The government has also given full support to the sector via allocating loan from commercial banks, allowing industrialists to import capital goods free of duty and providing tax holiday.

According to the report obtained from the corporation, the IPDC is becoming an engine for the rapid industrialization that nurtures manufacturing industries, accelerates economic transformation, promotes investment, and attracts both domestic and foreign investors. To activate both pre- and post-investment servicing, it avails serviced industrial land and pre-built factory sheds equipped with all-encompassing utilities and infrastructural facilities that fit international standards with no compromise on worker security and environmental safety. Of course, it is important to note that IPDC, in collaboration with the Ethiopian Investment Commission, the Ministry of Ethiopian Revenue and Customs Authority, and more institutions, provides a one-stop service for investors investing in designed



One of the industrial parks

industrial parks.

Currently, in order to strengthen its service provision capacity, the Industrial Parks Development Corporation is in the process of establishing a set of subsidiary companies in a bid to better handle the responsibilities of managing more than a dozen industrial parks in the country.

The subsidiaries under formation will be tasked with separately handling logistics, construction, consultancy, manufacturing, and agricultural supply chain services previously under the Corporation.

The development comes as the federal government moves ahead with its plans to transform industrial parks into Special Economic Zones (SEZs). Lawmakers have introduced legislation that would allow the parks to make the transition, which would entail additional logistics and trade capabilities on top of the manufacturing mandates they already handle.

All the 13 industrial parks developed and managed by IPDC are slated to make the transition.

"We are reforming IPDC to transform it from an entity that leases out factory sheds to a fully commercial one. We're establishing new business units as IPDC subsidiaries," Fisseha Yitagesu (PhD), Head of the Corporation, told investors during a panel discussion took place recently.

The state-owned Corporation is looking to tap in on businesses related to SEZs. Its executives plan to establish a logistics services subsidiary to cater to investors leasing space in SEZs. The Corporation is in the process of procuring heavy trucks to move goods between ports and SEZs, according to Fisseha.

Another IPDC arm is slated to provide consultancy, valuation, and project advisory services for investors, while an agricultural subsidiary will supply raw materials to factories in SEZs, according to the CEO.

Fisseha also disclosed plans to form a subsidiary engaged in the hospitality industry. "Industrial parks and SEZs will gradually change into urban centers so they'll need hospitality services," Fisseha said. The move will likely ensure continued state dominance in the upcoming SEZs

through government affiliated enterprises.

However, the CEO said the Corporation is also looking to work with private firms in joint ventures. The Corporation is tasked with operating the 13 industrial parks that have been erected across the country over the last decade. There are additional 10 privately-run industrial parks in Ethiopia.

In another development, the IPDC recently has revealed a significant increase in investment and production activities at Ethiopia's industrial parks, highlighting their crucial role in import substitution and export diversification.

The 13 industrial parks are specialized in various manufacturing sectors including textile, agro-processing and pharmaceuticals.

According to the IPDC Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Addisu Mamo, the parks have been established with the vision to make the country a leading manufacturing hub, and the government places high focus on industrial parks development and expansion.

He further indicated that recent investments by both local and foreign investors have resulted in the occupation of most industrial park units, with a utilization rate of 85% and the registered growth witnessed due to the IPDC's reform initiatives, including streamlined procedures and enhanced customer services.

The growing prominence of industrial parks in manufacturing essential goods, such as pharmaceuticals, textiles, and agricultural products attributed to the results. The Kilinto Industrial Park's contribution to substitute imported pharmaceuticals and the Debre Birhane and Bole Lemi industrial parks' ability to meet the demand for malt by local beer producers played vital role in accelerating productivity.

"We have been registering remarkable achievements. For instance, we have encouraging activities in improving import substitution in pharmaceuticals as we have been spending huge foreign currency to import pharmaceuticals. We have been working to reverse this and currently obtaining good results.

Additionally, we have also recorded

concrete achievements in agro-processing. The factories located at Debre Birhan and Bole Lemi industrial parks have been able to supply malt to our beer producers 100%. Previously, the factories used to import malt from various European countries. These malt factories have already been in process to export their product as they have covered fully the domestic demand," the deputy CEO said.

Moreover, the Jimma Industrial Park is actively receiving raw materials from neighboring avocado farmers, creating a sustainable market chain. Accordingly, the Jimma Industrial Park's avocado-based edible oil production is benefiting up to 70,000 avocado farmers, he said.

In the textile and garment sector, products manufactured in industrial parks meet global quality standards and are exported to major markets, including the United States and Europe. Textile and garment manufacturers are also contributing to import substitution by producing uniforms for various organizations, reducing the need for foreign imports.

IPDC's efforts to foster mutually beneficial partnerships between industrial parks and surrounding communities are also evident. For instance, a Chinese company is establishing a camel milk processing facility, providing a valuable market outlet for the local camel farmers.

Overall, industrial parks are playing a pivotal role in Ethiopia's economic development by substituting imports, diversifying exports, and creating employment.

As investment and production continue to grow, these parks are poised to further strengthen the country's economic competitiveness by strengthening import substitution and export trade.

Import substitution of textile and food items has already been bearing fruit. It is indicated that 100% of beer barley seed demand in the country has been covered with domestic products.

The nation has begun exporting beer barely seeds as the country was able to produce surplus. Ethiopia is also working to fully substitute imports of food and beverage products as well as textiles and garments in the next three years.

Art & Culture

About the author, the novel: Nervous Conditions (Part 8)

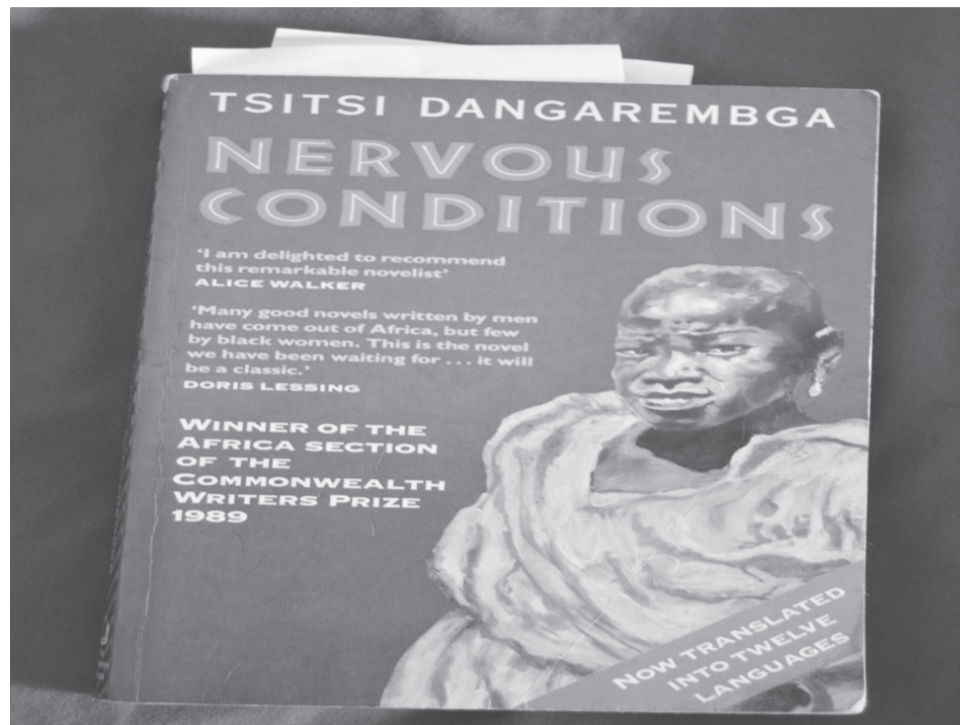
BY MEKDES TAYE (PhD)

A poet, a novelist, a filmmaker, and a gender and culture activist, Tsitsi Dangarembga was born on February 14th, 1959, in colonial Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). According to Coundouriotis, when she was only two, she moved to England with her family, where she lived until she was six. In 1965, she returned to Rhodesia with her family, started her formal education at a mission school in Mutare, and completed her secondary school at an American convent school. That was the time when her writing process started; writing just for herself was a sort of cure, making her a way out of the alienation she was exposed to in her schools. As she explained in her interview with different media houses, she read the classics of English literature both at school and at home (probably as a result of formal education); however, she read her first African novel (Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *A Grain of Wheat*) as a teenager, but it was not until she returned from Cambridge shortly before Zimbabwean independence in 1980 that she became passionately involved with African and African-American literature.

As she said it in her talk with journalists, she has been portraying her life in the various forms of literary works. She centralizes the issues that she faced when writing poems, novels, and even film scripts. The first novel that made her prominent across the continent and even at the globe level is *Nervous Conditions*.

This novel is about women's placement and worsening realities in precolonial and colonial Zimbabwe. It follows the major character, Tambu. This girl is the strongest, most strategic, cautious, and goal-oriented girl among other characters mentioned in the novel. Since her family was too poor and patriarchal, she faced a challenge when moving towards education. The family was, in a way, to afford the school fees of her younger brother Nhamo. He was very arrogant and the one that always needed a show-up over her. But he suddenly lost his life. Then she was the only one to take his place. Thus, the family, with the alerting initiation of Babamukuru, the father of Tambu's father, was assigned to continue her education in this man's house.

Then Tambu was taken to her uncle. There were various forms of alienation in this house. That is, she was faced with a new way of life, a new way of people interaction, and a new way of culture in general. However, she was always optimistic in those troubling situations. She was smart in looking for a way out of the problems on her way to education. But the daughter of Babamukuru, Nyasha, was not strong enough to cope with the alienated socio-cultural life of Zimbabwe since she was born and grew up in Britain. Thus, she only knew the living style of this country. Her father, Babamukuru, was not effective in showing her directions as per her psychological makeup. Then she lost



This novel is about women's placement and worsening realities in precolonial and colonial Zimbabwe. It follows the major character, Tambu

her identity, became mentally sick, and ended up in a hospital bed. But Tambu was so smart that she achieved her educational goal. She joined the mission girls' school.

Tsitsi Dangarembga did extend the story of Tambu in the sequel of the novel that is called *The Book of Not*. The story even extends to the third novel called *This Mournable Body*.

The writer was asked by the SABC journalist about the unforgettable incident she faced when writing the novel *Nervous Conditions*. She relied on the following: "I have finished writing the novel in 1984. I can't publish it since no one could assist me financially in Zimbabwe at that time. I was obliged to keep it till I solved this problem. In 1988, it was published. But within these four years, I was turning my face to the film industry. I was writing and directing various films that can again incur money and keep work."

For the one who read the novel, the personal

trait of the protagonist Tambu looks after the personal life path of the writer herself. Tambu in the novel is a very strong girl who never gives up on lots of dragging challenges. Rather, she looks out for the solutions systematically. In the same fashion, Dangarembga also looks for a solution to the problems she faced. The above incident is the best instance of this assimilation.

As her biography showed she was experiencing the worst face of alienation since her younger age. As she said to the media, the inferior position that society allotted for females just by their sex is the most important issue that worried her for many years. She actively saw the subversion of women and girls in her area. Then she picked her pen up to echo these unfair treatments as other dominant women writers did after the independence of Zimbabwe. Artistically she addressed the severity of gender biases, violence, and ignorance.

As she mentioned in the interview she was also concerned with the inferiority of women and girls based on their color. As she was in abroad with her family, she was facing this challenge in various degrees. She portrays this challenge in *Nervous Conditions* too. It was exhibited by the character Nyasha. To show the harshness of the problem the writer created Nyasha and ended up her as a loser that resulted from psychological trauma.

She believed that the mentioned challenges are common threats across humankind. She argued that echoing the issue artistically is one measure for striving for the solution. In this regard, Dr. Rose Chikafa, a lecturer at Harare University, said while she was having a short interview with Herald that "the literary works of Dangarembga aimed at alleviating the socio-cultural issues of the people not only Zimbabwe but also African too. She at the same time documented the historical events of her country artistically."

Dangarembga believed in the relevance of education for bringing a difference in

gender-based treatments. She centralizes it by creating the strong zeal of Tambu for learning. Tambu was patiently passing thorny surfaces for the sake of her education. The writer developed the story of the character based on the relevance and mandatory of females' commitment and persistent effort which should be made for education as African females. After this self-commitment, Tambu was seen finding the right way to education and a good life in the long run. The wife of Babamukuru is also a strong woman in managing her education and her family. She had MA as her husband. But the socio-cultural setting is not willing to adore her degree. It is Babamuku's degree which is respected and known. But her education was refunding and enabling her to build her self-esteem finally.

Since she was mainly focusing on film script writing, production, and directing, Dangarembga was not writing novels as expected. The selected works are mainly based on various sources the first one is her short story called *The Letter*. It was published in 1985 in Sweden. Following that, she published her first novel, *Nervous Conditions*, in 1988, which made her the first black woman author of Zimbabwe, whose work was also published in Great Britain. This novel made her win the African Section of the Commonwealth Writers Prize in 1989. It was the one among the top 100 African books list. It was also in the story list of BBCS.

She also captured a story for the film *Neria* in 1993. This film, as she said it to SABC, is written based on her personal story partially. In this film, she framed gender issues and females' sufferings artistically. Furthermore, she produced her films, *Everyone's Child* in 1996 and *Kare Kare Zvako* (*Mother's Day* in English) in 2004. Two years later, she wrote *The Book of Not: A Sequel to Nervous Conditions*. That means after the first story, which was told 18 years ago, the continuing story was addressed to readers through this book. Though the time interval between the two stories is so long, the hotness of the issue till today made this publication very relevant for the full picture of the characters in the novel. The destiny of the major character Tambu was creating suspense for the readers. Thus, her fate was decided by the second novel. The author also wrote the third novel, which has a continuation from the previous two books.

In the process of challenging patriarchy and women's subversion, every discipline had its share. Artists who orchestrate human beings' lives in the form of a creative world can play a lot. Their works can educate, alert, inform, and change the minds of the people enthusiastically. Thus, Tsitsi Dangarembga has been throwing her share in this case. Since verbalizing and expressing the problem itself is one way ahead for the solution, African writers should be active enough to raise such issues in their creative works. For her influential gender-based works, she deserves many thanks.

Indepth

Africa taking targeted preparedness measures as Mpox cases increase

As the mpox virus continues to spread to new countries across Africa, triggering a continental health emergency, health authorities are sparing no effort in taking targeted measures to control the outbreak—and have called on funders to ensure that resources are distributed fairly.

Mpox (formally known as monkeypox) was declared a global health emergency by the World Health Organization (WHO) and Africa CDC on August 14 after the new strain, known as clade 1b, began to proliferate from the DRC to neighboring African countries, including Rwanda.

On September 6, the Africa CDC and WHO announced the launch of the Mpox Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan, a joint continental response plan for Africa to support countries' efforts to curb the spread of the virus to save and protect lives.

Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (Africa CDC) director general, Jean Kaseya, said at the launch that this "unified strategy ensures that all partners are aligned on common objectives, eliminating duplication and maximizing impact."

The overall estimated budget for the six-month plan, running from September 2024 to February 2025, is close to USD 600 million, with 55 percent allocated to mpox response in 14 affected AU Member States and readiness for 15 other Member States, while 45 percent is directed towards operational and technical support through partners.

"This is an important milestone for a coordinated action between our agencies to support countries by reinforcing expertise and mobilizing resources and capacities to swiftly and effectively halt the spread of mpox," said Dr. Matshidiso Moeti, WHO Regional Director for Africa. "By coming together, we can achieve more, and our collective strength will carry us further, ensuring that communities and individuals are protected from the threat of this virus."

Mpox cases in Africa have increased at an unprecedented rate over the past three years. In addition to zoonosis-linked outbreaks, the intensified human-to-human transmission through sexual behaviors and other factors requires urgent attention and an enhanced response, according to the Africa CDC and WHO.

To address the ongoing mpox outbreaks, a comprehensive strategy is critical for effective management and mitigation.

It also needs equitable access to resources.

Africa CDC welcomed the Governing Board of the Pandemic Fund's recent statement on funding, in which it agreed to fast-track support to countries affected by the crisis and to develop a special financing mechanism to support countries experiencing public health emergencies—but with a caveat.

"Africa CDC acknowledges and profoundly appreciates its continued support in strengthening pandemic prevention, preparedness, and response capacities across the continent," it said, but it also called for "speed and efficiency in garnering resources for mpox, as well as the creation of a special financing mechanism to accelerate support for outbreaks, including mpox."

Africa CDC and other health organizations on the continent are acutely aware that the playing field is often not even.



Africa is taking a multi-faceted approach to stemming the mpox epidemic

"It is the ardent desire and hope of Africa CDC that this transformative upcoming funding round will prioritize a more inclusive approach, increasing support to a greater number of African countries and regional entities, especially in light of the limited allocation in the previous round, where only five (5) of the fifty-five (55) African nations received funding," it said in a statement released on September 11, calling for an end to delays in the interests of ensuring that health and lives of African populations are safeguarded and prevent the further spread of mpox.

"Together, we have the opportunity to avoid the repetition of past mistakes and build a more just and equitable global health architecture."

The Mpox Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan emphasize a community-centered, multisectoral approach tailored to the unique epidemiology and risk profiles of each member state. The plan bolsters surveillance, laboratory testing, and community engagement and ensures the availability of critical countermeasures while building resilient and equitable health systems.

Data from the Africa CDC indicates that there have been 37,583 cases and 1,451 deaths—affecting at least 15 African Union States, including Benin, Burundi, Cameroon, the Central African Republic (CAR), Congo, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Egypt, Ghana, Liberia, Morocco, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sudan and South Africa.

Health professionals consider a mutated strain of clade 1, a type of mpox that spreads through contact with infected animals and has been endemic in the DRC for decades, to be the strain of greatest concern.

Kaseya said during the recent press briefing in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, that the continental health organization was currently moving towards securing almost 1 million doses of the MX vaccine.

Africa CDC and United Nations Children's

Fund (UNICEF) announced on September 5 that the first shipment of 99,100 doses of the JYNNEOS mpox vaccine had arrived. This shipment is expected to launch a critical vaccination campaign aimed at curbing the rising epidemic in the DRC, the Africa CDC said in a statement.

On September 10, a further shipment of 15,460 doses of the mpox vaccine arrived in the DRC, donated to Gavi-eligible nations by the vaccine producer Bavarian Nordic. They add to the 215,000 vaccine doses that the European Union donated.

One major shortcoming often highlighted is that behaviors are directly implicated in accelerating the spread of mpox, impeding the behavioral change by people who already face challenges in accessing healthcare services in remote communities in Africa.

Prof. Jean Jacques Muyembe, a prominent African epidemiologist from the DRC who is also senior advisor to the Africa CDC's director general, told IPS that for the specific case of his home country, mpox continues to spread through contaminated bushmeat, which a large part of local communities consume in quantities.

"Adopting and maintaining healthy behaviors is important for these communities where notable zoonotic diseases such as mpox are believed to be transmitted through bushmeat," said Muyembe, who is also the chair of the DRC's National Institute for Biomedical Research (INRB).

According to the findings released by the WHO, mpox can spread from animals to people in a few ways, such as through small wild animals in West and Central Africa, where the disease is endemic or with direct close contact with an infected animal, fluids or waste, or getting bitten or scratched.

While bushmeat in most parts of sub-Saharan Africa where mpox is endemic cannot be simply wished away, Muyembe points out that the administration of lifesaving vaccines to hundreds of millions of affected communities remains the best

solution for Africa to defeat the outbreak.

"Randomized controlled trials will help us to measure the effectiveness of these health interventions," said Muyembe.

Apart from bush meats, initial investigations conducted by the Africa CDC in the DR Congo and research elsewhere in Europe suggest that vulnerable populations, like sex workers and men who have sex with men, may be at risk.

"Well-organized standard care can reduce the mortality rate of mpox in Africa, but education is also critical to sensitize most families using the forest for hunting to abstain from bushmeat and also to practice safe sex," the senior Congolese epidemiologist told IPS.

Kaseya points out that in addition to surveillance and diagnosis, African vaccine manufacturing seems to offer a promising and sustainable solution as the continent currently works hard to safeguard itself against future pandemics and disease outbreaks—and to ensure delays like the ones African nations faced in receiving COVID-19 vaccines never happen again.

"The only tool [for prevention] we have today in Africa is vaccine but for the diagnostic, we want to ensure that in some countries we move from the current 18 percent of testing up to 80 percent of diagnosed cases," he said.

Since its inception, polymerase chain reaction (PCR) technology has been widely used in all stages of vaccine product development as a tool to assist in the evaluation of vaccine quality, safety and efficacy, especially in Africa.

"Capacity building is critical to support those who are conducting testing in the field," Kaseya said of current efforts jointly conducted by Africa CDC and other strategic partners, including Global Fund and GAVI Alliance.

Drawing from the past experience of COVID-19, health experts are concerned about vaccine availability.

"Today with mpox we are in a similar situation (to COVID) where we need to look for vaccines because we don't manufacture them," he said.

Danish biotech firm Bavarian Nordic has concluded a deal with Africa CDC to ramp up production of its mpox vaccine and enable its vaccine to be manufactured in Africa in the future.

Through the concluded technology transfer deal, the African pharmaceutical industry will start manufacturing the mpox vaccines, according to Africa CDC officials.

Out of nine existing pharmaceutical industries in Africa, only one factory has the capacity to provide the mpox vaccine, it said.

Prof. Nicaise Ndembi, senior advisor to the Africa CDC's DG, told IPS that the available evidence indicates that the mpox vaccine remains a safe and effective way to protect against symptomatic infection in high-risk close contacts.

"We need to build on current progress made to ensure that the African region is not left behind in efforts to control the mpox pandemic," he said.

SOURCE: INTER PRESS SERVICE

Law & Politics

Strengthening Ethio-China ties through education, infrastructure development

BY EYUEL KIFLU

In the twenty-first century, global collaboration among countries has become increasingly vital for development across various sectors. A notable example of this is the partnership between African nations and China, particularly in the realm of infrastructure development. The sight of China executing megaprojects throughout the African continent has become a common occurrence, signaling a deepening relationship that is poised to reshape the economic landscape of the region.

At the forefront of this partnership is the China Communications Construction Company Limited (CCCC), a leading firm that serves as a key facilitator of Chinese investment in Africa. With a significant presence on the continent, CCCC has undertaken numerous projects that not only enhance infrastructure but also foster economic ties between China and African countries.

One of the most prominent examples of CCCC's work can be seen in Ethiopia, where the company has been active for over two decades. During this time, CCCC has been involved in various construction initiatives, ranging from roads and bridges to railways and different projects. These endeavors are not merely about building physical structures.

Furthermore, CCCC's projects in Ethiopia have created thousands of jobs, offering employment opportunities to local communities. This influx of jobs is crucial in a country where youth unemployment remains a pressing challenge. Sometimes, there are concerns about wages as well. However, by providing training and skills development, CCCC is not only contributing to the economy but also empowering the Ethiopian workforce.

The collaboration extends beyond mere construction. It fosters a robust exchange of engineering expertise and technology between Ethiopia and China. This transfer of knowledge is essential for building local capacity and ensuring that Ethiopian professionals can take the lead in future infrastructure projects.

In an exclusive interview with *The Ethiopian Herald*, Wei Qiangyu, General Manager of CCCC Ethiopia, highlighted the company's 26 years of collaboration in Ethiopia. He emphasized the significant advancements in technology transfer and capacity building, noting that many local partners have evolved into general contractors. "The competitive landscape now includes many capable local contractors, and our collaboration has produced high-level management professionals, both within our company and beyond," he stated.

He noted that Ethiopia is a critical strategic partner for China, aligning with President Xi's call for enhanced communication and deeper ties with African nations. Ethiopia's status as a BRICS member further solidifies



this relationship. Recently, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed visited China for the Fourth Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), resulting in 17 memoranda of understanding (MOUs) aimed at future cooperation, he added.

Regarding the recently held opening ceremony of China First Highway Engineering Co., Ltd. (CFHEC) Seagull Talent Training Project Wei Qiangyu said that the training designed specifically for mid-level Ethiopian employees at CCCC. He explained that 102 selected trainees are engaged in a comprehensive 30-day training program, focusing exclusively on skill development without outside work distractions.

The training encompasses four essential areas: surveying, building construction, materials testing, and equipment maintenance. "These skills are crucial for successful project execution," he added. Wei Qiangyu acknowledged that while many employees have diverse experience, site training alone often falls short. The program aims to enhance their skills and improve career advancement opportunities.

In addition to technical training, participants will receive instruction in Chinese language to facilitate better communication in their roles. He expressed optimism for the future, indicating that this training is just the first phase of a systematic approach to employee development, with subsequent phases planned to evaluate and enhance training effectiveness.

According to Wei Qiangyu the opening ceremony was attended by the Minister Counselor from the Chinese Embassy in Ethiopia, further reinforcing the diplomatic ties between the two nations. He underscored the long-term vision of CCCC Ethiopia: "We aim to increase the proportion of Ethiopian staff, both technically and in management, making

our company a truly Ethiopian-Chinese entity."

With around 600 Chinese and 8,000 to 9,000 Ethiopian employees currently, he envisions a future where Ethiopian professionals form the backbone of the company. "Our goal is sustainability and confidence among our employees, fostering a long-term commitment to their careers," he concluded.

The recently held opening ceremony of CFHEC Seagull Talent Nurturing Project has been initiated with the goal of empowering Ethiopian employees at CCCC, particularly those in engineering fields. The training is designed to provide trainees with practical skills and knowledge relevant to their work on-site.

On his opening remark Eyob Ayenew (PhD), Head of the Private Higher Education Institutions Service Desk at Ministry of Education expressed his enthusiasm for the collaboration between Ethiopia and China, highlighting the significant role that CCCC plays in the country's infrastructure development.

CCCC, a major state-owned enterprise, is known for its extensive work in the design, construction, and operation of vital infrastructure assets. Since its initial involvement in Ethiopia in 1998, with the construction of the Gotera Ring Road, the company has become integral to numerous mega projects throughout the nation.

He emphasized that CCCC's investments not only enhance physical infrastructure but also provide substantial employment opportunities for Ethiopian citizens. The company has been instrumental in transferring knowledge and skills to local employees, contributing to significant social and economic changes. One of the latest initiatives, the Seagull Talent Training program, aims to train and

cultivate professional talent among engineers, thereby promoting growth within the construction industry.

As Ethiopia undergoes extensive reforms and embarks on ambitious projects including upgrading road networks, developing recreation parks, expanding airports, and others, there is an increasing demand for well-trained professionals in construction and related fields. Recognizing this need, the Ethiopian government, particularly the Ministry of Education, is actively working to improve educational quality. Initiatives include granting autonomy to public institutions, enhancing digital data management, and implementing new student assessment systems to ensure high educational standards.

Since 2018, the government has revised curricula and developed a new education roadmap to better prepare graduates for the workforce. However, formal education must be complemented by on-the-job training, which is why programs like the Seagull Talent Training are vital. This initiative provides Ethiopian engineers with opportunities to enhance their theoretical knowledge and practical skills, ensuring they are competitive both nationally and internationally.

The Chinese Embassy in Ethiopia Minister Counselor Yang Yihang, on his part, said that the training showcases CCCC's active role in fulfilling its social responsibilities, helping the company achieve better development while promoting the exchange and transformation of management and technical experience.

He expressed hope that the trainees will fully utilize this opportunity to enhance their skills and play a more significant role in their future work, contributing more to the friendship between the two countries.

Women in Focus

African women's role in preventing conflict, sustaining peace

BY MEKDES TAYE (PhD)

During political conflicts and armed confrontations that may occur within a given country, it is always females and children who face the harsh consequences.

Since these groups of society are naturally weak and women especially are the responsible ones to look after the family members, they encounter various forms of revenge instigated by the opposing parties.

Gender-based violence, including sexual abuses and even killings are dominantly exercised on them. As the history of the Rwandan people showed the world, a large number of females and children were left to lead a life filled with various types of long and short term psychological traumas.

Lots of girls, wives, and even young girls were raped, abused and killed by the soldiers as retaliation for their men's family members. The violation and abuse of the females were purposely done to harm the psychological makeup of their men who ran away for conflict. Thus, the meaning of peace and avoidance of conflict for females is much deeper than their counterparts.

Needless to say females are mothers, sisters and daughters. Their inclination for peace, togetherness and compassionate emanates from their nature; especially after giving birth to a child.

After becoming a mother, various studies showed that, the women tendency to creating negotiations, preventing conflicts and assuring peace in the family and in the society gains more accelerated than their former state. In relation to this justification, the theory of Motherism argued that the power that the woman starts having after birth is also important for allowing her lead and manage the overall setting of the family.

This power is at the same time relevant to control the issues created in society at large. Thus, the efficacy of women in the process of promoting peace, the propensity to curb and resolve conflicts did originate from their role that they founded it naturally and practiced primarily in the family and the society.

In the raised issue, the United Nations had arranged a conference that met up some influential women from different areas. This program aimed to support African women to participate in the dialogue and peacekeeping process. Among the members of the conference, Elizabeth Alpha-lavalie (Member of the council of the Wise ECOWAS) was interviewed regarding the relevance of women's inclusion and participation in peacekeeping process.

Here is her reflection. "In your role as a mother for example a mother of 5, they are not the same, they are not as they may come from the same parent, they all have different tricks, different attributes. There

In Ethiopia, the inclusion of women in the process of peace and national dialogue is the most underlined issue. Women's stipulation and contribution in the dialogue is boldly mentioned in the guidelines of the national dialogue commission

are some who are disgusting, some who are lovely, some who like to fight and you, the mother, is always a mediator that is why we say women are born negotiators."

The logic raised by the woman is the basic trend and cultural practice that the continent has been implementing for years. It is the mother who is more than the father that could take care of the children, and it is she who solves the problems that happen in between the children. Thus, the success of the children and even the father is highly impacted by the smartness of the mother. In Ethiopia and many other Africa countries literature I have read that if there is a child who fails in any performance or behaves rudely unlike the other family members, it is the mother who could take that blame even by the father.

Priscila Misharabwi- Mushonga (MDC Mutambara Delegate, Zimbabwe Post election mediation process) had a say on this context. In her talk, she made a clear distinction between men's and women's intention when the two are involved in the peace-building and conflict presentation process. Here is her belief, "when I go into a negotiation, I want an outcome for I am negotiating for peace. Men are negotiating for power. So for men, the thing is the delivery to be getting power. So, it is about power sharing. For me, if I create the necessary environment, it is the most important thing I wanted.

Creating a peaceful place that can enable a woman to walk in the street without being violated is what I needed most. Can she go



and get her business done without being messed up? Can she be able to do the work that will ensure that her child goes to school? Can she go and access necessary thing...if I can deliver that I would have deliver on my mandate."

Since the women know how peace is important for their lives, it is the most valuable thing that exceeds anything in the universe. Thus, they only worried about the achievement of it. They are not running for a political seat. The persuading and satisfying point is addressing a peaceful environment for other women. They know what that peace meant for the women.

Women's inclusion in the peace-making and national dialogue thus did mean a lot when it is simply seen from the natural traits of the women. As many scholars put it in different ways, females are soft, calm and peaceful in nature. Thus, their involvement is the portrayal of their natural gift, which is going to be performed solidly. Andrew Marshal (Deputy Director of the center for Humanitarian Dialogue) confirmed that "it is pretty difficult to have a sustainable agreement if half the populations are not participating. So, the perspective of women is needed in to make peace process more sustainable."

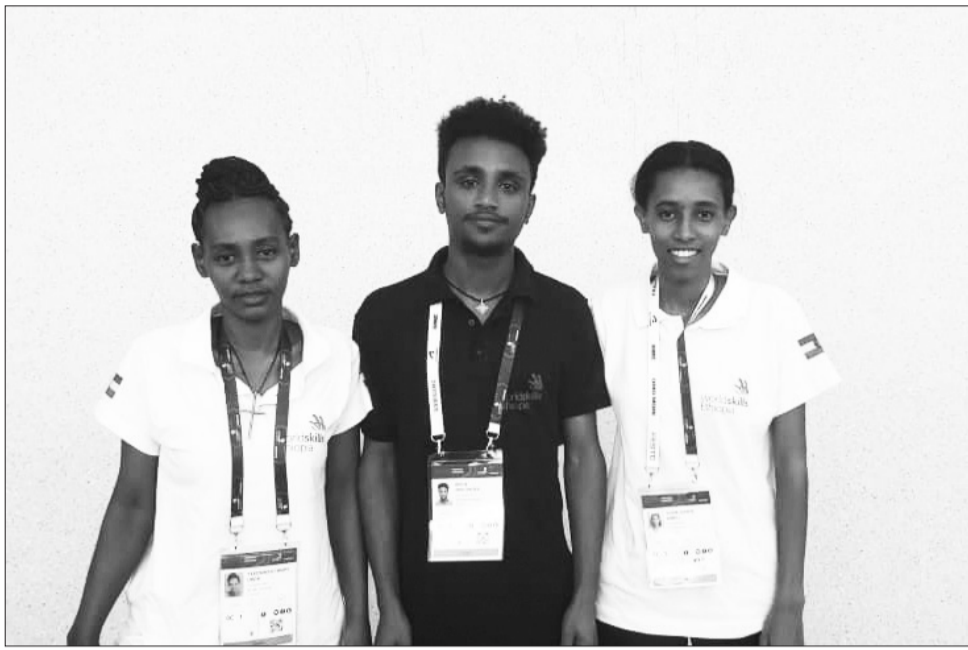
Women have been checked in the process of negotiations and mediations. The presenter in the conference had reported the following. "Empowering women at the local level perpetuates, and I have done it, the distinction between the soft peace building and the hard work on peace making considered to be at the soul preference of track one invariably led by men."

In Ethiopia, the inclusion of women in the process of peace and national dialogue is the most underlined issue. Women's stipulation and contribution in the dialogue is boldly mentioned in the guidelines of the national dialogue commission. Yonas Adaye (PhD) asserted that the commission is committed to ensuring the inclusion and participation of women in every region. He said that this procedure is working through advocacy, training, awareness and capacity building process that is going to be potentially done consecutively till the active involvement and inclusion of women is secured.

In the conference made in different regions of the country, the numbers of women participants were not encouraging. Thus, the commission took a bigger lesson on those occasions and decided to make a change on the number through the mentioned mechanisms.

Though the importance of women's inclusion in terms of number and quality is an agreeable point, African women are still restricted to staying in villages and at different forms of social associations. However, as Andrew puts it above, the input of women on the issue is vital for producing an inclusive and sound policy and implementation. Thus, women needed to be encouraged to take the forefront in the process of conflict preservations and peace building moves. As mothers and as females, their sympathetic approach has a potential impact for shifting the minds of the rivalries. Women's inclusion in the peace making procedure is not relevant for the proportion of the number only. It is also a ground for its sustainability.

Society



Ethiopian competitors at the World skills Competition, France



Labor and Skills Minister Muferehat Kamil

Shaping tomorrow's workforce today

BY MENGISTEAB TESHOME

The World Skills Competition is more than just a showcase of technical prowess; it is a transformative platform that plays a crucial role in benefiting young people who participate in the contest. As young competitors across the globe get together to demonstrate their skills in various professions and areas, it enables them to exhibit their abilities, talents, and skills and contributes to a broader vision of skills and innovation development and draws lessons.

Recently, the 47th World Skills Competition, which gathered 1400 competitors from about 69, was held in Lyon, France. Ethiopia, which became the 88th full member of the International Skills Organization (World Skills) lately, also participated in the skills competition.

The event, often stated as the “Olympics of Skills,” is the world’s largest vocational education and skills competition, showcasing excellence across a wide range of trades.

According to the Ministry of Labor and Skills, Ethiopia’s talented youth (a boy and two girls) participated in the competition in three areas: ICT and Networking, CNC Machine, and Furniture Making (woodwork). At the competition, about 1400 young competitors, drawn from 70 countries, participated in 60 professional areas. In addition, partaking in the panel discussion held on the sidelines of the competition, Ethiopians shared their experience.

The competition is believed to open opportunities for participants to hone their technical knowledge and skills, go together with the rest of the world, and shape the nation’s tomorrow’s workforce.

Competitors engage in rigorous training programs leading to the event, often guided by experienced mentors and industry professionals. This hands-on experience allows competitors to master their skills and gain a deeper understanding of their

chosen field. As they prepare, they learn how to navigate complex tasks, overcome problems, and apply theoretical knowledge in practical scenarios. Many agree that this level of skills mastery is invaluable in equipping participants for future careers.

This event promotes the excellence of savoir-faire in over 60 skills, reflecting their diversity and importance in the global economy.

According to Minister of Labor and Skills Muferehat Kamil, Ethiopian youth are participating in this global event by competing in ICT and Networking, CNC machines, and furniture-making skills.

President of World Skills Lyon 2024, Max Roche highlighted the four core values of the World Skills Competition—excellence, generosity, openness, and unity. He said: “We believe that everything is possible with skills. This competition is all about sharing—sharing skills, knowledge, happiness, and success. We want to welcome everyone, no matter where they come from.”

In an exclusive interview, Entoto Poly Technic and Vocational College Dean Teshome Feyisa said that it is regrettable to lose this platform for many years. “I remember when I was in Germany last year for a work visit, the issue of becoming membership of the World Skill was discussed, and we witnessed MoLS’s commendable effort to let Ethiopia join the organization. Our neighbors, from far and near, including Kenya and Uganda were members long ago and exploited the platform to hone the skills of the youth.”

Mentioning that Ethiopia was represented by three competitors; he said one of the competitors is from Lideta Sub City in the area of wood manufacturing. He was competing in woodwork furniture-making skills.

“In my view, the world is in high demand for skilled workforce, and preparing the human capital as per the demand of the market is crucial in many ways. For instance, the job market encourages participants to think creatively and innovatively. Engaging

competitors in the latest technologies and methodologies helps them to develop unique solutions to complex problems. This exposure not only broadens their technical capabilities but also cultivates a mindset geared toward innovation,” he said.

According to him, as contestants encounter challenges during the competition, they must adapt and think critically; skills that are essential in today’s fast-paced job market.

Moreover, competing on a global stage can be a daunting experience, but it is also exceedingly rewarding. Participants often report significant boosts in confidence as they showcase their skills and receive recognition for their hard work. This newfound self-assurance extends beyond the competition, influencing their personal and professional lives. Additionally, the experience helps develop essential soft skills such as teamwork, communication, and time management, all of which are critical in any career.

What is more, it also helps to produce successful competitors who can be role models for their peers and the younger generations. Their achievements inspire others to pursue technical education and vocational training, helping to shift societal perceptions about skilled trades. By showcasing the importance of these skills, the World Skills Competition encourages more youth to consider careers in fields that are often overlooked, such as plumbing, electrical work, and culinary arts.

It is believed that the impact of the World Skills Competition extends beyond individual participants. Skilled youth contribute to local economies and communities, and drive development and innovation. As they enter the workforce, they bring fresh ideas and perspectives that can lead to greater efficiency and advancement in their respective industries. Moreover, a skilled workforce is an essential element for economic growth, making competition vital for the future of many nations.

He noted that as the World Skills Competition is becoming a powerful catalyst for youth empowerment, developing the skills and knowledge of the posterity is fundamental. By providing opportunities for skill development, career advancement, and personal growth, it could play a crucial role in shaping the next generations.

As young competitors showcasing their talents and pushing the boundaries of innovation, they not only shape their own futures but also contribute hugely to creating a more skilled, dynamic, and prosperous society. He noted that investing in such initiatives is essential for ensuring that youth are equipped with the needed knowledge and skills to overcome the challenges of tomorrow’s workforce.

World Skills International is a non-profit organization that works to promote Vocational Education and Training (VET) in countries across the globe. World Skill Competition is staged every two years in different parts of the world and hosts conferences about vocational skills. It also describes itself as the global hub for skills.

According to documents, the World Skills Competition provides an excellent stage for youth to connect with industry leaders and potential employers. Networking opportunities abound, allowing participants to forge relationships that can lead to internships and job offers. Success in the competition serves as a powerful endorsement, enhancing a young person’s resume and demonstrating their commitment to excellence. Many employers actively seek out individuals who have competed at such a high-level competition, recognizing the dedication and skills that these young professionals possess.

Ethiopia officially became the 88th full member of the International Skills Organization (World Skills), and the membership certificate was awarded on September 12, 2024. The platform provides economic and social significance for the country and its youth in terms of skill transfer, experience exchange, and industry linkages, among others.



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HU collaborates with universities to improve Africa's agricultural sector

BY EPHREM ANDARGACHEW

Universities are being encouraged to combine their efforts to improve Africa's agricultural sector.

This was expressed during a discussion between representatives from the Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM) and leaders from Haramaya University (HU). During the discussion, the delegates reviewed the TAGDEV 2 project, which was implemented at HU, as well as the work that HU is doing on its own and in partnership with its partners.

HU President Jemal Yousuf (PhD) said that the University is fulfilling its responsibilities by modernizing the agricultural industry in the nation, Africa, and throughout the world by producing skilled professionals who seek to ensure that people have adequate food.

He added that from its inception, Haramaya University has worked effectively with a variety of local and international partners. Accordingly, HU, since the inception of RUFORUM, has not only participated in it but also implemented a variety of projects.



The delegate in agricultural field

Hence, the university is not only fulfilling its responsibilities by producing qualified experts capable of modernizing the agricultural sector but also developing improved seed varieties and agricultural technologies that deliver them to users. Accordingly, 24.5 percent of the best seeds in the country were produced by HU and delivered to the users.

Since HU is well experienced and competent, it is implementing projects with various partners including RUFORUM, and is providing effective work to the citizens and the country, he stated.

The RUFORUM Skills and Community Development Project Manager Professor

Anthony Egeru stated that the forum has created an opportunity for universities to work together to alleviate the problems of the African agricultural sector.

He also explained that the RUFORUM has confirmed through previous projects that educating and empowering young people and women can be effective in alleviating Africa's problems. Hence, RUFORUM is helping universities equip their agricultural students with sufficient knowledge to create jobs.

To feed Africa, it is imperative to modernize the agricultural sector and change practices. Taking these facts into account, RUFORUM has been supporting the implementation of various



HU President with the delegation

projects that can improve the agricultural sector in its member universities, he noted.

HU TAGDEV Project Leader Getachew Shambel (PhD) explained that in TAGDEV 1, youths were asked to submit business ideas for a competition, and the winners were given a small amount of financial support for training and business start-ups.

Taking into consideration the experience and results gained from TAGDEV 1, HU plans to include Wollo and Mekele universities for the newly launched TAGDEV 2 project. Hence, the project will work to make citizens, especially, youth, women, and displaced people who engage in agriculture to be successful, he underlined.