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Restored Africa Hall : Pan-Africanists' living heritage

BY YESUF ENDRIS

The iconic Africa Hall, where Pan-Africanism took its deepest roots, is set to be reopened on October 21st following a 57 million USD extensive renovation. Originally inaugurated

in 1961 by Emperor Haile Selassie I, Africa Hall has long served as a central hub for African diplomacy, where the founding fathers of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), now the African Union (AU), first gathered.

As part of the renovation, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) has prepared a permanent exhibition that will showcase the historical significance of the Hall. The exhibition will capture the journey
See Restored Africa Hall ... page 3

Ministry eyeing lucrative ports for livestock exports

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

ADDIS ABABA - The Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) said that it has been exploring the lucrative and the nearest ports for its livestock exports to boost livestock market.

Approached by *The Ethiopian Herald* the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) De-Risking, Inclusion, and Value Enhancement of Pastoral Economies in the Horn of Africa Project (DRIVE) Program Manager Jemal Aliye stated that the lucrative port feasibility study has finalized to explore lucrative or the nearest port for the livestock exports. The nearest port is critical in shortening export time, minimizing cost and others.

The additional and the nearest port or ports would be announced soon. These and other activities would contribute to boost country's livestock market in the future, he said.

See Ministry eyeing ... page 3

Ethiopia pinpoints enhanced multilateralism towards Int'l peace, security

BY STAFF REPORTER

ADDIS ABABA The United Nations (UN) must be at the center of effective multilateralism by overcoming the influences coming from selective national interests, Foreign Minister Ambassador Taye Atske-Selassie said.

Ethiopian delegation led by Amb. Taye is taking part in the UN Summit of the Future that is being held in New York.

The Summit calls for scaled up cooperation and multilateralism by adopting three negotiated documents: Pact for the Future, Declaration on Future Generations and Global Digital Compact.

In delivering a speech at the Summit

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News



Hosanna to inaugurate 200-mln Birr corridor project

BY HAILE DEMEKE

ADDIS ABABA – Hosanna Town Administration is preparing to inaugurate a 2.6-kilometer corridor development project, with an estimated cost of 200 million Birr, according to Mayor Dawit Tumdudo.

Speaking to the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA), Mayor Dawit revealed that the project, which is part of a larger 7-kilometer initiative, is nearing completion and will be inaugurated within a month. The remaining 4.4 kilometers, with a projected cost of 500 million Birr, is set to begin soon.

Upon completion, the project is expected to significantly enhance the town's overall appearance and infrastructure. The development will include green spaces, recreational areas, public toilets, and other facilities, aiming to transform Hosanna into a modern, attractive place for its residents.

The mayor emphasized the administration's commitment to finishing the project on time, with construction continuing around the clock. The corridor development aligns with the national agenda of creating smart cities that meet international standards.

In addition to the corridor project, Hosanna has launched the construction of a public park covering 102 hectares, with an estimated cost of 100 million Birr. This project is part of a broader national effort to enhance urban aesthetics and connectivity, with a focus on building cities that reflect Ethiopia's status as Africa's diplomatic capital.

The corridor development project is a key component of enhancing Hosanna's connectivity, accessibility, and aesthetic appeal. By creating modern and well-planned urban spaces, the project seeks to improve the quality of life for Hosanna's residents and contribute to the town's overall development, Dawit remarked.

Hosanna, a rapidly growing town in southern Ethiopia, has been undergoing significant urban development initiatives in recent years. As part of the government's broader plan to modernize and beautify Ethiopia's cities, Hosanna has been investing in infrastructure improvements, including road construction, public spaces, and green areas.

Ethiopia's tea exports surpass 2 mln USD

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

ADDIS ABABA – The Ethiopian Coffee and Tea Authority (ECTA) reported that more than 1,142 tons of tea were exported to the global market in the 2023/24 fiscal year, generating over two million USD in revenue.

ECTA Communication Director Sahlemariam Gebremedin told the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that the tea exports for the year exceeded the previous fiscal year's (2022/23) volume by 292 tons. However, he emphasized that while 50,000 tons of tealeaf were exported, there is still significant untapped potential in the sector.

In earlier years, Ethiopia's renowned tea was grown on just 5,000 hectares of land, with foreign earnings never surpassing three million USD annually. To increase output, 460 million saplings were planted across 30,000 hectares during the 2023/24 fiscal year.

Despite these efforts, Sahlemariam

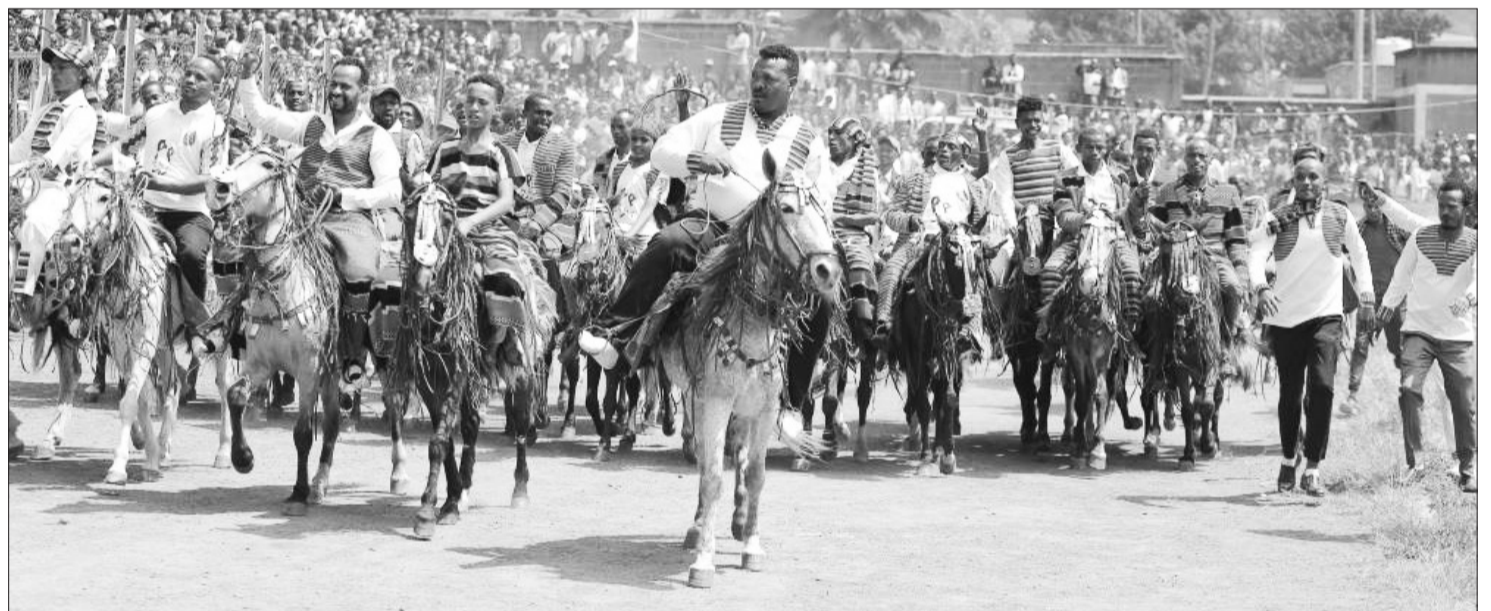


highlighted the low participation of investors as a key obstacle to maximizing foreign currency earnings. "The government must encourage more investors to engage in the sector to fully realize the country's potential," he said.

The director also noted that tea is a long-term investment, with plants producing for 30 to 40 years and yielding harvests every 15

days. The sector not only brings in foreign exchange but also creates employment opportunities across the country.

Ethiopia's tea industry has been steadily growing in recent years, driven by increased domestic production and exports. The country's favourable climate and fertile lands make it well-suited for tea cultivation, particularly in the highlands.



Wolayeta's Gifaataa New Year seeks UNESCO recognition

BY MESERET BEHAILU

ADDIS ABABA– The Ethiopian Heritage Authority (EHA) is working tirelessly to secure international recognition for the Wolayeta community's New Year, *Gifaataa*, as an intangible cultural heritage by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

In a recent statement, EHA representative Getachew Arebera highlighted the collaborative efforts of the Wolayeta University, Wolayeta Zone Culture and Tourism Department, Wolayeta Zone Administration, and the former Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples Region (SNNPR) Culture and Tourism Bureau to elevate *Gifaataa* to international status.

Since Ethiopia's first intangible cultural heritage registration in 2013, the country has successfully listed five such heritages. EHA has now submitted a comprehensive proposal for *Gifaataa*, which involves a detailed evaluation of the festival's cultural significance and adherence to UNESCO's criteria. "In this regard, the necessary application documents were prepared and submitted to the organization seven months ago," Getachew added.

The rating and identification process for *Gifaataa* is currently underway, and EHA is closely overseeing the steps to ensure its successful registration. If recognized by UNESCO, *Gifaataa* would not only enhance Ethiopia's cultural heritage portfolio but also contribute to the global recognition of the

Wolayeta community and the country as a whole.

Getachew urged all stakeholders to actively participate in preserving, promoting, and transmitting *Gifaataa* to future generations. By seeking UNESCO recognition, the EHA and the Wolayeta community are demonstrating their commitment to safeguarding their cultural heritage and sharing it with the world.

Gifaataa is a significant cultural celebration marking the New Year for the Wolayeta people, an ethnic group primarily residing in the South Ethiopia State. The festival is steeped in rich traditions, rituals, and symbolic activities that reflect the unique cultural heritage of the Wolayeta community.

Kenya's power imports from Ethiopia up in six-month

ADDIS ABABA (Xinhua)—Kenya's electricity imports from Ethiopia rose 88 percent in the first six months of 2024 as compared to a similar period in 2023, as the East African nation sought cheaper hydropower, the national statistics bureau said in a report Friday.

Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS) said the country imported 672.26 million kilowatt-hours (kWh) of power from Ethiopia during

the six months, an increase from 357.44 million kWh a year ago.

The imports have been on the rise, growing from a low of 20 million kWh a month in 2023 to a high of 122 million kWh per month in 2024.

According to KNBS, supply from Ethiopia makes the bulk of the power imports for Kenya, with imports from Uganda registering a decline

to 106.07 million kWh in the six months, from 141.23 million kWh in a similar period in 2023.

The Energy and Petroleum Regulatory Authority of Kenya noted in a recent report that Ethiopia became the main supplier because of its cheap hydroelectric power.

Kenya has built a 500-kilovolt interconnector line to facilitate power imports, accelerating

regional power trade. The country's electricity consumers stand at about 10 million, with the number having doubled in the past years as demand rises, according to Kenya Power, the country's main electricity distributor.

Kenya's installed power capacity stands at 3,321 megawatts, with the country diversifying its production of electricity from geothermal, solar and wind sources.

News

Ethiopia, China pledge bilateral cooperation on intellectual property

BY MESERET BEHAILU

ADDIS ABABA –Ethiopian Intellectual Property Authority (EIPA) announced that a two years bilateral cooperation action plan agreement was signed with China National Intellectual Property Administration (CNIPA) at Beijing.

The agreement was signed between EIPA's Director General, Woldu Yemisel and CNIPA's Commissioner, Shen Changyu last week.

According to the information sent through social media platform to The Ethiopian Herald that the two bodies have agreed to strengthen their agreement to work together and have signed an agreement to implement the plan in various intellectual property fields in the next two years.

At the signing ceremony, EIPA's Director General Woldu Yemisel said that the agreement would help to strengthen cooperation on intellectual property, facilitate the transformation of knowledge and information, and Ethiopia gain more experience from BRICS.

According to Woldu, the agreement is to provide educational and training opportunities in Chinese universities aiming at increasing the capacity of the authority's



human resources; it includes informational, legal, technical and related issues.

“The bilateral cooperation has been strengthened in a new way in order to take the relationship of the two institutions to a higher level. It means that the agreement is useful to widening programs on capacity building training, facilitating technology and innovation on intellectual property, and protecting social intellectual property,” the Director General said.

By the same token, Ethiopia has participated in the 3rd BELT and ROAD Conference of Heads of Intellectual Property Institutions of Associated Countries whilst the country agreed on future works and obtain meaningful outcome in that regard, Woldu

cited.

CNIPA's Commissioner, Shen Changyu on his part said that the two countries cooperation in the field of intellectual property is substantial. The agreement was signed because the two parties need to enlarge the intellectual property engagement alike economic, trade, and science and technology of the two countries' government.

The Commissioner underlined that the agreement was made the day after Ethiopia joined the BRICS member countries, thus it will increase the cooperation of the aforementioned institutions. Therefore, the agreement helps to increase the protection and encouragement of intellectual property in Ethiopia, he noted.

Ministry eyeing ...

He indicated that the lucrative port or ports for livestock export would be announced soon in the presence of concerned bodies. Having the nearest port for export has a significant role in determining country's export revenue as well as contributes to national economy. According to documents, Ethiopia with its ample livestock resources has not been benefiting from the sector. The majorities livestock export trade requires moving animals over long distances from one area to coast. This has been encountering difficulties in exporting.

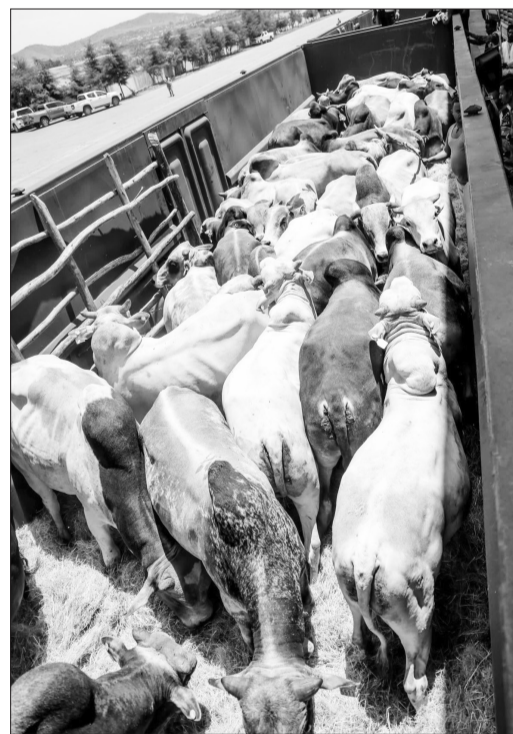
The Red Sea and Gulf of Aden have formed an important trading nexus for many centuries, linking ancient trading empires.

The country has been underway various efforts to facilitate livestock export. For instance, the government and its partners

have been installing international standard laboratories in a bid to enhance livestock export offering training for experts, availing materials and others. These activities would contribute to penetrate global market, he stated.

Furthermore, the Ministry has been also awaiting a three million USD laboratory materials delivery to equip all of livestock laboratories. The assessment research is finalized to announce international bid to assess the situation of laboratories to fill their gaps. In Ethiopia, there are five livestock quarantine centers.

Since, the pastoralist and semi-pastoralist areas are the most important areas generating 90% of livestock export exchange earnings. As a result, Ethiopia is working to construct additional quarantine centers, collection centers and expand access to lucrative ports, he pointed out.



Ethiopia pinpoints...

and participating in an interactive dialogue under the banner “Enhancing multilateralism for international peace and security,” he also said that the UN needs to augmenting its human and other resources to provide a trusted convening platform for contentious issues.

During the course of his speech, the foreign minister underscores the need to shift from rivalry to cooperation, enhance tolerance for

policy differences, and build bridges to attain the most basic global development agenda.

He also stressed the need for better prioritization, enhanced solidarity, and political commitment in the UN to assist nations in their efforts to eradicate poverty within their policy choice.

Speaking on efforts to reform the UN, Amb. Taye called on the UN Security Council to carry out its functions and preserve its

authority and to respond to the quest for representation by Africa.

In his quest for respect to the foundation principles that constituted the UN charter, he said no rule, regional grouping, or alliance should be allowed to undermine the principles of sovereignty and sovereign equality, non-interference in the internal affairs of states, the prohibition of the threat or the use of force, and peaceful resolution of disputes.

Restored Africa Hall...

of Africa through time, divided into three themes: “Africa Then,” “Africa Then and Now,” and “Africa Now and in the Future.” It will also feature key moments in African history, including the signing of the OAU Charter.

The Hall is known for its architectural and artistic treasures, including the famous 150-square meter stained glass window designed by Ethiopian artist Maître Afework Tekle. This stunning artwork, depicting the unity of Africa, has been carefully preserved during the renovation. Antonio Baio, Project Manager of Africa Hall, stated that the renovation ensures all key historical features, such as the facade and floors, remain intact, while modern technology has been installed to meet contemporary conference standards.

Baio emphasized that the renovation goes beyond preserving a building; it retains the Hall's role as a cultural and historical symbol of Pan-Africanism. “The hall's iconic architecture, interior designs, and paintings have been meticulously restored while upgrading meeting technology for modern use,” he said.

The renovation also aims to enhance Africa Hall's function as a meeting place for African leaders, while providing scholars and the public with access to its historical significance. “An exhibition center will be open to the public, attracting scholars and visitors interested in the Hall's storied past,” said Getachew Araya, Civil and Architectural Works Supervisor at the renovation project.

The project is part of Ethiopia's broader effort to preserve its historical heritage and solidify its status as a center for African diplomacy. Funded by contributions from the governments of Ethiopia, Mali, Switzerland, Portugal, and the Netherlands, the renovation has been hailed as a successful preservation of a Pan-African legacy.

For over five decades, Africa Hall has been a venue for significant diplomatic negotiations and decisions shaping the political landscape of the continent. “The renovation focuses on four main goals: preserving the building's structure, upgrading meeting technology, safeguarding the building's heritage, and opening its legacy to the public,” Getachew added.

The restoration of Africa Hall is a testament to the importance of preserving Africa's historical heritage and ensuring that its legacy continues to inspire future generations. As a symbol of African unity and solidarity, the building has hosted numerous summits and conferences of African leaders, addressing critical issues such as decolonization, economic development, and regional cooperation. Its reopening is expected to draw international attention and reaffirm Africa's commitment to preserving its history.

Opinion

Ethiopia's irreplaceable role in keeping peace, security of Horn

BY GETACHEW MINAS

Despite its political, economic and social problems like any other countries, Ethiopia is a regional power that is empowered to project its influence beyond its borders. Generally, regional powers contribute to the stability and peace within their spheres of influence, just as Ethiopia does today. Its military power, population size, relative internal stability and diplomatic strength have all enabled it to stretch itself as a regional power. It is in a position to initiate regional peace and security in the Horn of Africa.

Ethiopia has contributed to the regional security agenda through the African regional and sub-regional entities. The meeting of its interests and those of its Western allies offer it acknowledgement to its regional position and standing. Simultaneously, other states in the Horn have not been able to achieve such position in the region. They could not achieve the same level of recognition as Ethiopia does for keeping peace and security in the area. Because of limited economic capacity, Ethiopia has only tried to contain regional security challenges within limits.

Emerging as an important and influential security participant in the Horn, Ethiopia has been able to secure the development assistance that it requires. This helps to boost its economic growth and development thereby fighting poverty that is rampant within the society. The external assistance is also used to deal with several local and regional constraints to its role in the region that includes fighting terrorism.

As mentioned earlier, its military and diplomatic role and demographic size allow it to increase its engagement in regional issues. This further reveals that it has the potential to lead and influence the region. However, its potential is not explicitly revealed by the government to neighboring countries. Of course, the position and status of the country in the Horn are constrained by historical factors. Yet, Ethiopia is endowed with a critical position for peacekeeping in the region.

It is known that Ethiopia is a fortification against religious extremists in the Horn area. It serves as an intermediary and peacekeeper. It also plays a major role in assisting the existing regional and international institutions located in the country. Experts point out that as the Horn of Africa is the most militarized and conflict-ridden region, where armed conflicts have raged within and between and among proxies of the superpowers. Among these conflicts are those related to unresolved border disputes and persistent tensions between neighboring countries.

Many armed groups control vast ungoverned areas. They also violently oppose the governments of the Horn. Regional powers are generally believed to contribute to peace and stability within their spheres of influence. In this regard,

Ethiopia, as a regional power, contributes to peace and stability in the Horn. It has also been exercising its influence in the area of economic development in the region. It is, therefore, an incontestable and prominent military, economic and diplomatic power.

Currently, Ethiopia has a strong military presence inside some of the countries of the Horn. Its troops are also deployed as peacekeepers in the countries of the same region that are contesting on border areas. Aside from its military engagements, Ethiopia has been involved in mediating and defusing tensions between countries in the Horn area. Such involvement reveals its increasing role in the security of the region. It has played crucial role in containing regional disputes between countries that are widely perceived as irreconcilable neighbors.

Reducing and calming the volatile situations in the Horn, Ethiopia has been able to enhance its role as a peacekeeper. This role is based on its material and human resource potentials and in the size of its population. Such a role is crucial for identifying it as a regional power. The possession of huge military personnel, assets, budget, experiences in warfare indicate Ethiopia's potential in the region. Combining its military and demographic size and diplomatic efficiency and effectiveness will further strengthen its role.

Applying its traditional regional power position, Ethiopia may continue to take a leading role in exerting influence in the Horn of African region. It continues to play a stabilizing role in the region by engaging in peaceful activities. Experts in the field suggest that such a country requires some degree of internal political stability which is needed to maintain regional leadership. In this regard, other countries in the Horn region have to give recognition to its role.

Historical experience, however, reveals that the leadership of a regional power is often resented by other countries of the region. Experts argue that the reason for such resentment is suspicion, hostility, and verbal resistance from neighboring countries. This may be due to disagreement, vulnerability, fear or historical factors. History reveals that acceptance of regional power by others may be based on economic benefits and the realization of political and economic weaknesses.

Acceptance and recognition by global powers is also important for regional power assertions. Moreover, material and human resources entitle a country, including Ethiopia, to classification as a regional power. Ethiopia is endowed with huge natural resources which are important inputs for exercising its role when compared to that of its neighboring countries. However, its power may be less visible or insignificant when compared at the global level. This is also true for other

African regional powers outside of the Horn region.

The countries of the Horn, however, have important historic socioeconomic, tribal, cultural, political, and security ties. But, some scholars argue that the region lacks a clear regional power as it is characterized by contested leadership. Those countries of the Horn with economic resources and power lacked the "hard power" or military strength to assume a leadership role.

Some countries of the Horn have been grappling with numerous unresolved internal armed conflicts. As a result, they could not assume the status of a regional power. Similarly, Ethiopia seems to be "constrained" by lack of economic growth and development required to assume that status. Yet, some experts argue that Ethiopia is the most "powerful and dominant" country in the Horn region.

Consequently, scholars are divided on whether or not it is qualified as a regional power. Regarding its constraint, it is a poor country with a low per capita income. Its Human Development Index (HDI) is among the lowest in the region, though it is working to improve this situation. Also, some of its labor force is unemployed and lives in poverty. Its people are migrating looking for better economic opportunities.

In recent years, however, the economy is partly recovering from the damages of internal conflicts. Agriculture is on the verge of recovery as it accounts for a large share of the economy and as employer of most of the Ethiopian labor force. The public investment in infrastructure, commercial agriculture, and the rise in non-traditional exports have contributed to the growth of the economy.

In the past few years, the country has also been able to attract Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) from the global emerging economies. Yet, there are some internal political challenges the country is currently facing. These are security challenges from a number of armed insurgent groups. These groups are ethnic based armed factions fighting for the liberation of areas with support from tribal and clan groups. These groups have been launching minor attacks and skirmishes, killing civilians and peasants in rural areas. In response, the government has undertaken successful response in a counter-insurgency campaign.

The armed ethnic groups have been divided among many factions. Their local support has also been shrinking over time because people in their areas of operation are exhausted from conflicts. However, the presence of these groups has increased the vulnerability of Ethiopia to traditional external threats and foreign interventions. Experts have argued that "local conflicts" have been exploited to balance the power of neighboring countries in the Horn. Ethiopia has, therefore, suffered from such conflicts initiated by its historical enemies

aiming at obstructing the country from using its resources and seeking to exploit its natural resources at the end.

Apparently, the conflicts are sourced by armed, trained, and financially supported fighters. These fighters are only instrumental for the ulterior objective of external forces or powers whose ulterior goal is to divide and weaken Ethiopia along ethnic and tribal lines. The overt objective is, if possible, to topple the government in Ethiopia and maintain anarchy.

If there is any sign of anarchy in the country, superpowers are ready to confront each other, not to perpetuate democracy and rule of law, but to extend their hands of exploitation in Ethiopia. Apart from armed insurgency, the lack of domestic political consensus among various political parties in Ethiopia perpetuates anarchy. In the past decades, the ruling party had been criticized for failing to develop a genuine, inclusive, and a democratic political system.

In the aftermath of the violently contested election, the ruling party diminished the political arena by enacting laws on terrorism, press, and election. Some journalists, members of opposition parties, and supporters were all jailed or forced into exile. After that elections became uncompetitive and the ruling party won all the parliamentary seats, except one. Then, according to experts in the field, the ruling party had attempted to legitimize its hold on power through economic growth and development in the previous decades.

The ruling party of the current incumbent, however, has made reforms in all spheres including giving fair space for the opposition parties via releasing prisoners from jail and opening door for discussion than conflict.

Moreover, when compared with the previous regime, it has gone long distance in giving political assignments for some opposition party leaders and members up to the ministerial level. It may be argued for not enough, but it is a good beginning for a country that had been suffering under the leadership of dictatorial rule. Recognition to this effort, beefs up movement of the leadership on the governmental position to go further in enhancing democratic system.

On the other hand, condemning every step of the government giving blind eye to its activities in terms of developmental work, stabilizing internal affairs and the Horn issue will take the nation nowhere. For Ethiopia, to continue playing its irreplaceable role in keeping peace and security of the Horn, appropriate recognition is essential both from internal bodies and external forces.

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

Editorial

Ethiopia's eminent effort for enhanced multilateralism

Ethiopia has been diligently working for the maintenance of world's peace and security. As the only independent African nation that obtained membership of the League of Nations, the precursor of the UN, and as a founding member of the UN itself, Ethiopia has demonstrated its unrivaled commitment for the realization of true multilateralism.

In addition to deploying its personnel to the UN peacekeeping missions, Ethiopia is also working to fight poverty and climatic shocks making the needed sacrifice.

Of these efforts, the clean energy project, the Grand Abay Dam, which help cement the ideals of multilateralism in East Africa, the entire region and beyond, comes at the forefront. Besides, the country has continued conducting robust diplomatic missions, undertaking momentous projects targeting at connecting nations thereby reinvigorating multilateralism and enjoying color blind diplomacy so as to safeguard its independence devoid of any intent to harm others.

Needless to state, Ethiopia is a founding member of the United Nations, and the UN System in Ethiopia is one of the largest in the world covering both development and humanitarian assistance. Fortunately, Heads of State and Government have gathered at UN Headquarters to chart out a better future.

When global leaders meet at the UN, they will confront yet another year of complex crises and conflicts across many parts of the globe. The UN is the only place where countries, be they are big or small, have a say. The debates and conversations could help shape the solutions that can redefine the planet's future.

Undeniably, the future of the earth depends on everyone's true participation. The voices of every region and people matter a lot. True multilateralism gives room for all voices to be heard equally. The UN in this regard has a lot to accomplish.

Here, the Summit, which is well underway encompassing leaders, activists as well as all concerned, is expected to help participants determine how the international system can better meet the needs of the current and those of generations to come.

As it is high time to accelerate action, awareness, accountability towards goal achieving, the General Assembly held within a known interval is really an opportunity for cementing partnership and making synergy for the sake of fostering sustainable development goals.

The global summit, in which Ethiopia is partaking, would underscore the urgent needs for enhanced international cooperation and multilateralism towards addressing the pressing changes from which the world over is severely suffering like climate change, poverty, inequality, ongoing conflicts, global health crises.

In sum, it is important to build capacity to, with full commitment of course, implement the Sustainable Development Goals and highlight agenda like financing for climate change adaptation, debt reduction, capacity building, and technological support. Here, Ethiopia's commitment to boost multilateralism, international cooperation as a founding member of the United Nations and impartially working with all actors, is the peculiar feature it does have from which many can draw important lessons. The country is also endeavoring to lift its citizens from the poverty they find themselves in via undertaking projects like the aforesaid one, which can be taken as a viable manifestation of the steps to boost multilateralism, indeed!

Opinion

Terrorist irredentism and hegemonic containment on the Horn of Africa, implications for Ethiopia

BY SOLOMON DIBABA

The IS which has lost ground in most parts of the world seems to search for a safe haven in the Horn of Africa searching for a niche in Somalia. On yet another development, the Federal Government of Somalia has invited foreign forces into the country as part of the agreement to support Somalia against possible war with Ethiopia under the guise of peace keeping.

In a country where Al-Shabab and Al-Qaida are controlling quite a larger territory of the nation, it is no surprise that global terrorist groups and hegemonic forces are now focusing on Somalia. The entry of Egyptian hegemonic forces in Somalia based on Somalia's a smokescreen of attack on her sovereignty by Ethiopia has grown to the extent that Al-Shabab has managed to attack targets in Mogadishu. Global terrorist forces are now clustering on the Horn exploiting the situation from weak governance and insecurity in Somalia.

Apart from the traditional powers that are competing for controlling the Red Sea route and outlet to the Indian Ocean, a consortium of terrorist forces and hegemonic and destabilizing pentagonal alliances who are in an alliance on the Horn are joining the conspiracy of choking Ethiopia who has been managing the peace and stability of 60% of Somali territory and attempting to block her right to have access to the sea. The expansion of terrorism on the Horn is indeed an offshoot of terrorist expansion in the rest of the continent.

Various researches and data from several sources that document and report incidents of terrorist attacks and entrenchments across Africa including Global Terrorism Index 2022, shows at least three key trends in Africa. The first trend is the increasing surge in the incidents of terrorist attacks over the years. The second trend involves the equally troubling rise in fatalities from attacks. From a human security perspective, it is worth noting that much of the burden of the attacks and the fatalities is borne by civilians. The most recent figures show that these two trends are particularly true in the Sahel and the Central Africa regions. The third trend relates to the geographic expansion of the threat of terrorism on the continent. There is no longer a region of the continent free from the activities of groups identified as terrorists. This geographic expansion continues as more and more territories face the risk of becoming theatre of terrorist operations.

According to the 2022 Global Terrorism Index published in March 2022, five of the ten countries most affected by terrorism are from Africa. All except Somalia are from the Sahel/Lake Chad Basin region. Six of the eight countries in the Sahel are amongst the 10 most impacted countries for terrorism in Africa. Of these, Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger are the ones experiencing fast growing burden of terrorism in Africa today. According to the index, out of 20 countries most affected by terrorism in the world, eleven are also from Africa including the Horn.

The terrorist threat in Africa has been shaped by activities in two regions and led by two terrorist organizations, both affiliated to Al Qaeda, namely Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), in North and West Africa, and Al-Shabaab in East Africa. Boko Haram, while active in northeast Nigeria, was far from its later day infamy as the most lethal terrorist group in Africa. Over the past seven years, the geography of terrorism in Africa has completely changed.

Terrorism in the Horn of Africa is a major concern for regional security due to its geopolitical significance and ongoing conflicts. The Horn of Africa, which includes countries like Ethiopia, Somalia, Eritrea, Djibouti, and parts of Sudan, has been a hotspot for extremist activities and terror networks, including groups like Al-Shabaab and Islamic State affiliate.

Weak and unstable governments as well as ethnic and religious conflicts and fragile state structures and lack of good governance create environments where extremist groups can flourish. Somalia's decades-long conflict has made it a center of terrorism, with Al-Shabaab controlling large areas.

The region's borders are often poorly monitored, allowing militants and arms to move freely between countries like Somalia, Kenya, Ethiopia, and Djibouti, increasing the spread of terrorism.

Various foreign military bases and interventions, including those by the United States and other countries, have been established to counter terrorism, particularly targeting Al-Shabaab. However, this foreign presence also contributes to local anti-Western sentiments that extremist groups exploited which led to the mitosis of new terrorist groups

High unemployment, poverty, and lack of education in many Horn of Africa countries leave young people vulnerable to recruitment by terrorist organizations. Who give them false promises of employments overseas?

The region is rife with inter-clan and ethnic conflicts, which are often manipulated by terrorist groups to gain influence, especially in areas where governments have limited control.

A Somali-based militant group that has been responsible for major terror attacks in Somalia and Kenya. Al-Shabab has strong ties to Al-Qaeda and controls significant parts of Somalia.

Though less influential than Al-Shabaab, there are factions of the Islamic State that operate in parts of Somalia, competing for influence in the region.

A regional peacekeeping mission aimed at stabilizing Somalia and countering Al-Shabaab's influence. The U.S. conducts airstrikes and supports local governments and regional forces in combating terror groups.

Countries like Ethiopia have actively engaged in counter-terrorism operations to prevent the spillover of extremist activities from Somalia. Terrorism in the Horn of Africa poses a significant threat to regional stability, economic development, and peace efforts. Collaborative regional and international efforts are critical for combating this menace.

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The Ethiopian Herald

Business & Economy



Making the agriculture and the manufacturing sectors complementary helps ensure food security

How can sustainable food security be ensured?

BY MENGESHA AMARE

Investing in agriculture is one of the most effective ways of reducing hunger and poverty via promoting farming productivity and enhancing environmental sustainability. However, for any investment to have a positive impact on agricultural production and productivity, it must contribute to capital formation at the farm level.

Taking this fact into account, *The Ethiopian Herald* conducted an exclusive interview with Alemayehu Lemma, an agro-economist graduated from Haramaya University in agro-economics, to receive a professional comment on the significance of investing in agriculture for sustainable food security.

“Investments made by the farmers themselves are indispensable as these moves constitute the foundation and the engine for sustainable development and the reduction of poverty and hunger. For farmers, the main sources of investment finance are their own savings and their fixed capital, which are used as collateral for credit. Capital formation is certainly higher for farming households with positive savings and clear, legally recognized possession of land,” Alemayehu said.

He added that, apart from the capacity to invest through the generation of savings and fixed assets, the factors driving investment for farm-level capital formation are the growth of the food value chain from producers to consumers, which includes agro-industries and the provision of public goods in the form of basic infrastructure, such as roads, electricity, education and technology.

Here, there has to be a need for new investment strategies that are centered on agricultural producers and focus public resources at all levels on the provision of public goods and vital crops.

True, improving productivity and food availability, he said, has to be taken as a very good and foremost step towards sustainable food security in Ethiopia and the east African region. The most important approach to promote agricultural productivity growth towards achieving sustainable food security in the country is giving special attention the role of investment, both in fiscal and human capital, in maintaining and increasing agricultural production and productivity.

He said, “Ensuring food for all, today and in generations to come, is one of the greatest

challenges facing Ethiopia, the African continent and even the world community at large. Food security is the ability of people to meet their required level of food consumption at all times; it is considered by many to be a basic human right. However, numerous people lead life in poverty as food-deficit developing countries cannot meet such basic needs.”

The rapidly growing economies enjoy abundant, affordable food supplies, while poor, slow-growing countries suffer from food scarcity and malnutrition. This means that not only is shortage but also imbalance in distribution is a food security problem. This trend has to be well bridged via drawing important lessons from one another, he added.

As to Alemayehu, another aspect of food security is sustainability. Food production continues to keep up with demand in generations to come and the prosperity of the current generation at the expense of the future. Here, as over-exploitation has resulted in natural resources being depleted and the environment being damaged and the greater intensity of use of land and water resources as well as chemicals has created problems such as soil erosion, water pollution, pest resistance, etc, the government needs to attach due emphasis to all these challenges to confidently ensure food security via expanding the agriculture sector and backing the industry, manufacturing and investment.

As to Alemayehu, when and how food security can be achieved depends on a number of economic, social and political factors, at the national, regional, continental and even at international levels. Socio-economic factors with potentially significant effects on future developments in food situations like population and income growth, demographic changes and urbanization on the demand side, as well as technological change and productivity growth on the supply side, need to be made congenial as much as possible.

Therefore, he added future agricultural production and productivity growth depend on, among others, a combination of agricultural, investment, environmental, trade manufacturing and macro-economic policies at a larger scale.

Although food security issues are multi-faceted, the focus has to embark on food availability and production in Ethiopia,

East Africa, Africa and other parts of the world as a first step towards addressing such trying issues. Particular attention has to be paid to the role of investment and agricultural productivity as these sectors are of paramount importance in meeting the challenge of sustainable food security.

It is well recognized that when evaluating the performance of a production unit or the agricultural sector, it is common to use production, productivity or efficiency, actual output relative to the potential output or best practices, he opined.

He further stated that agricultural output and productivity vary greatly with the stage of economic development, resource endowments, government policy and agronomic-ecological conditions.

If adoption of new technology requires additional investments, lack of access to credit and additional inputs may prevent or slow down technology adoption. Here, all impediments to technology adoption, which means careful planning and provision of necessary infrastructure, are expected to be well promoted as they are essential to capture the full benefits of new technology, as to Alemayehu.

Human capital refers to knowledge, experience and skills possessed by people involved in the production process. It is influenced directly by education, training and extension. Its importance lies in the fact that it has a significant impact on the adoption and the utilization of technology, which in turn, affect the allocation of resources and productivity thereby ensuring food security and production surety. This ability is becoming ever more important in an increasingly real economic growth, by which food security can be guaranteed.

He said, “The importance of policy reform is increasingly viewed as fundamental for agricultural productivity gains, especially for countries like Ethiopia, where government intervention in agriculture has been strong. Removing market distortions and allowing market signals to be transmitted to producers is the main objective of structural adjustments.”

Concerns over food security are driven by the need to feed an increasing population and to protect the environment. One means of addressing these concerns is to increase the food supply locally by improving

agricultural productivity. Although productivity varies across commodities and localities according to stage of economic development, government policy and agronomic-ecological conditions, long-term growth in agricultural productivity depends primarily on technological change, improved input use efficiency and conserving the resource base. All of which, in turn, depend crucially upon investments in agricultural research, extension, and human capital ultimately contributing to the effort geared towards ensuring food security.

Due attention attached by the government is also of significantly useful in providing the farming community in particular and those who are actively engage in agricultural investment. Not only are these bold moves significantly useful in augmenting production and productivity and promoting economic growth but they are also of instrumental in coming up with viable means towards ensuring food security, he underscored.

The role of government is to promote investment on agriculture, human capital and infrastructure, manufacturing, private investment thereby reinvigorating production, productivity and other related avenues to confidently ensure food security coupled with more open and doable policies towards stable and sustainable economy.

Alemayehu further stated that more importantly, the lands acquired by investors which tend to be among the best ones, with good soil quality, high production potential, irrigation and proximity to infrastructure and markets should be made much more active and lucrative in a bid to ensure food security.

In sum, the net effect on food security will also depend on the additional income generated by devising many more projects, its sustainability and how this income is distributed in the local economy has to be well scrutinized, too. To this effect, he said lack of good governance, absence of rule of law, shortage of transparency and other factors contributing to low level of production and productivity have to be well addressed.

In the Sphere of Diplomacy

Forging strong diplomatic ties to foster regional peace, security

BY EYUEL KIFLU

Ethiopia stands as a pivotal diplomatic and economic player in the Horn of Africa, a region that has garnered increasing global attention due to its complex geopolitical landscape. The nation's enduring legacy as a stabilizing force is not only significant for its immediate neighbors but also resonates throughout the entire African continent.

In recent years, Ethiopia has demonstrated its commitment to fostering peace and security in the Horn of Africa, a region often spoiled by conflict and instability. This proactive stance has earned Ethiopia recognition as an indispensable player in maintaining regional security.

Moreover, Ethiopia's influence extends beyond diplomacy; the country is also making strides in economic development. Strategic investments in infrastructure, agriculture, and technology are positioning Ethiopia as a key economic hub in the Horn of Africa. The government's initiatives aim to stimulate growth and enhance trade relations with neighboring nations, thereby contributing to a more prosperous and stable region.

Recent visits by officials from various countries to Ethiopia further underscore its strategic importance. These diplomatic engagements reflect a growing recognition among global leaders of Ethiopia's role in shaping the future of the Horn of Africa. They signify a collective acknowledgment that stability in this pivotal region is crucial not only for local nations but for international interests as well.

During her recent visit to Ethiopia, Hanna Tetteh, the Special Envoy of the UN Secretary-General for the Horn of Africa, engaged in discussions with Foreign Minister Taye Atskeselassie. The two officials addressed pressing issues concerning regional peace and security.

Minister Taye expressed appreciation for the efforts of Tetteh's office in promoting stability in the Horn of Africa, emphasizing Ethiopia's readiness to enhance diplomatic initiatives in collaboration with neighboring countries and various international organizations.

In addition to his talks with Tetteh, Minister Taye also met with Mike Hammer, the US Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa. Their discussions centered on peace and security concerns in the region. Minister Taye highlighted Ethiopia's apprehensions regarding the post-ATMIS (African Union Transition Mission in Somalia) arrangements and reiterated the country's commitment to

de-escalating tensions.

They also addressed the situation in the Tigray region, underscoring Ethiopia's dedication to fully implementing the Pretoria Peace Agreement. Furthermore, Minister Taye called for the restoration of Ethiopia's status under the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA).

The simultaneous visits of Tetteh and Hammer in September signal Ethiopia's ongoing commitment to peace and its proactive stance on current political issues in the region. Despite challenges, including attempts by nations like Egypt to destabilize the area, Ethiopia is focused on diplomatic dialogue rather than military action. However, concerns remain regarding recent movements in Somalia, which some perceive as a betrayal by countries that have historically supported Somali peace efforts.

Last week, the President of the Horn of Africa Friendship Group of the Parliament of France, Senator Hugues Saury, visited Ethiopia with a high-level delegation. During their meeting, Minister Taye briefed them on the current situation concerning ATMIS and the potential deployment of a multinational peacekeeping force in Somalia. Saury acknowledged Ethiopia's pivotal role as an anchor state in regional and continental affairs, emphasizing the need for closer collaboration to strengthen bilateral relations between France and Ethiopia.

Minister Taye highlighted the Horn of Africa's geostrategic importance, noting that Ethiopia, with its rapidly growing population and expanding economy, must secure sustainable access to the sea through peaceful negotiations. He reaffirmed the longstanding diplomatic ties between Ethiopia and France, commending the strong cooperation in development, trade, investment, and cultural exchanges.

These high-level discussions reflect Ethiopia's commitment to fostering regional stability and its role as a leader in addressing the complex challenges facing the Horn of Africa.

On his bi-weekly press briefing the newly appointed Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Ambassador Nebiat Getachew also stated that Ethiopia will not passively observe any attempts to destabilize the region as well as to thwart its development efforts.

The spokesperson reiterated that Ethiopia's diplomacy prioritizes peace, security, mutual development, and regional integration based on principle and reciprocity. Meanwhile, the country

is monitoring the recent acts in its neighbors, he noted.

According to him, Ethiopia will avoid engaging in hostile rhetoric aimed to distort its focus. However, we will not only continue monitoring actions in neighboring countries affecting Ethiopia's national interest but respond, Nebiat emphasized.

Nevertheless, he reaffirmed Ethiopia's commitment to peaceful resolution of disputes and regional cooperation. The country is actively engaged in diplomatic efforts to promote peace, security, and sustainable development in the region and on a global scale, according to him.

Ethiopia's unwavering commitment to both security and economic development exemplifies a comprehensive strategy for addressing the multifaceted challenges facing the Horn of Africa. As Ethiopia navigates the complex dynamics of the Horn of Africa, it continues to serve as a beacon of hope and resilience. The country's proactive involvement in regional peacekeeping missions and diplomatic negotiations highlights its role as a stabilizing force.

As the country continues to build on its legacy of resilience and hope, its commitment to a balanced approach to security and development serves as a model for other nations in the region. By prioritizing economic stability alongside peace initiatives, Ethiopia is not only shaping its own future but also contributing to a more secure and prosperous Horn of Africa.

Ethiopia's strategic role in the Horn of Africa is not just a matter of diplomacy; it embodies a profound commitment to fostering peace and economic stability in a region beset by challenges. As the nation navigates complex geopolitical dynamics, its emphasis on collaborative efforts with international partners positions it as a key player in shaping regional stability. The recent high-level discussions with global leaders underscore Ethiopia's importance as a diplomatic hub and a catalyst for economic growth.

The country's unique approach, which intertwines peace building with economic initiatives, serves as an inspiring model for neighboring nations. By prioritizing dialogue over discord and development alongside security, Ethiopia is laying the groundwork for a more resilient future. As it faces ongoing challenges, the nation remains committed to peaceful resolutions and collaborative efforts, ensuring that its legacy as a beacon of hope and resilience continues to shine brightly in the Horn of Africa and beyond.

By prioritizing economic stability alongside peace initiatives, Ethiopia is not only shaping its own future but also contributing to a more secure and prosperous Horn of Africa

Law & Politics

A futile attempt to tarnish Ethiopia's genuine proposal of cooperation

BY DANIEL ALEMAYEHU

As tensions in the Horn of Africa are escalating, the act of tarnishing the name of Ethiopia has become prominent which exacerbates the uncertainty in the region. The deliberate movement to tarnish Ethiopia's good deeds in the Horn has been entertained even by some state leaders and historic enemies of the country. With actors from different areas across the globe, everything is very sensitive and should be considered carefully when it comes to the Horn.

After Ethiopia and Somaliland signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) back at the beginning of January 2024, tension escalated between Ethiopia and Somalia. Using such a golden opportunity, some actors have started to mobilize their cliques to put pressure on the Government of Ethiopia by standing with the lies.

The dispute also paved the way for those enemies to tarnish the names of the signed parties. Though it seems that those historic enemies of Ethiopia are trying to bring the issue to the next level, the reality is rather unmatched. Those actors seek such dispute and instability in the Horn of Africa to address their own national interests despite they picture themselves as saviors and true partners of Somalia or a true peace seekers for the region.

The reality on the ground

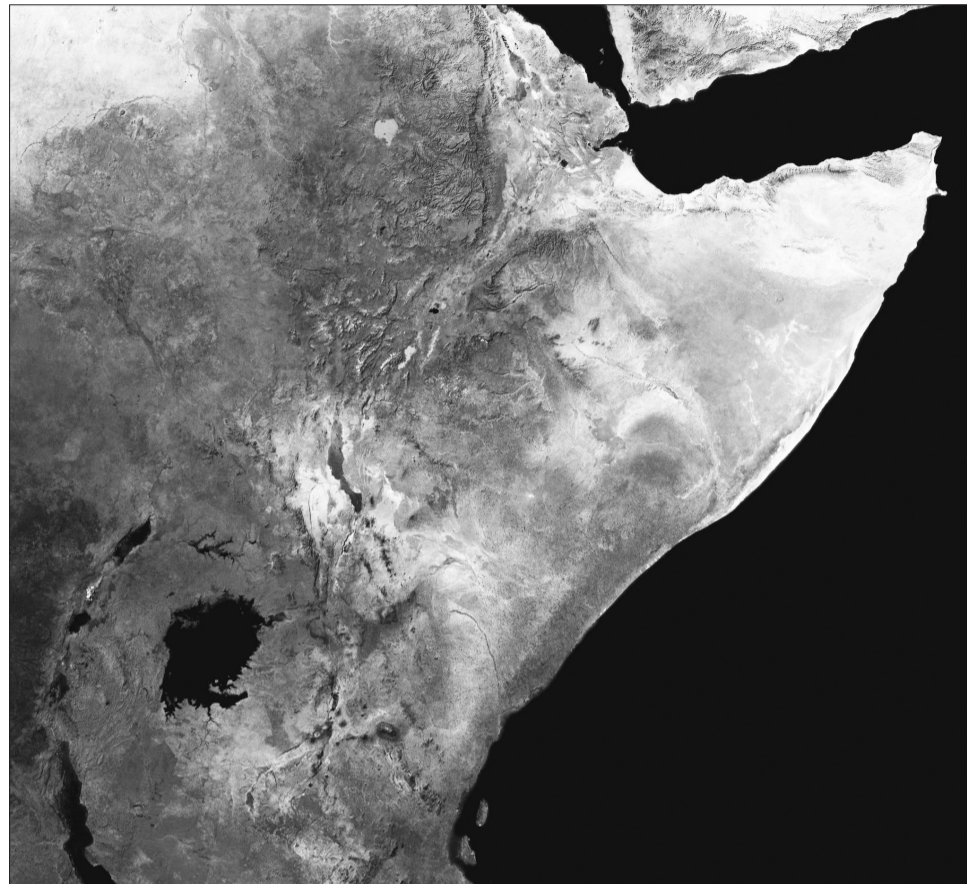
Though those actors who wish to trade by using the dispute between Ethiopia and Somalia, the Horn and the entire world know what Ethiopia did to the region and how Ethiopia is portrayed in striving for world peace. Ethiopia sacrificed its sons and daughters to ensure the peace and stability of the region, especially in Somalia.

Adversely, those actors who are accusing Ethiopia of the instability of the region have done nothing at any point in time. And even, some of them are also the ones who equip rebel groups to revolt on their government so that countries will no longer think about changing their economy and growth rather being busy with such instability.

As the region is congested with so many actors with various interests, Ethiopia should also observe things very curiously as many want to destabilize the region for the sake of its interests. Any act of instability in the Horn affects the whole nations of the area including Ethiopia. Such an act also adds another negative impact on the overall development of the region as some of the regional countries have been dealing with various internal conflicts.

Ethiopia's truth

Ethiopia is well known for its stand in diplomatic relations. In good truth, its



The Horn of Africa and the entire world know Ethiopia's way and unwavering commitment towards ensuring peace and stability in the Horn

foreign policy of Ethiopia has always been centered on advancing its relationship with its neighbors. Ethiopia believes that the well-being and prosperity of the country is closely tied to the peace, stability, and development of its neighboring nations. The country is committed to taking action to protect and ensure the destiny of the country and the region through taking responsibility.

Besides, Ethiopia is always committed to solve any dispute with any nation in a peaceful way. Speaking of the current disagreement with its neighbor, the Republic of Somalia, Ethiopia has shown its unwavering stand when it comes to peace and stability by accepting discussion sessions with Somalia representatives.

Ethiopia's stand

As mentioned above, Ethiopia wants to live peacefully with its neighbors no matter what the issue could be. Again, any nation has its own national interest to achieve, and so does Ethiopia. Being found in one of the most dynamic and volatile sects of the region, the Horn of Africa, Ethiopia must take its fair share of the benefits of the

region as it has accepted and lived up to all the hardest challenges and responsibilities of the region.

Speaking of national interest, Ethiopia must work on ensuring its national interest in the region as many other actors from different parts of the world come and do their best to do so. When it comes to Ethiopia's situation, actors from here and there start crying and tarnishing Ethiopia's name when the country raises some strong national interest.

It is the fact that Ethiopia is blessed with many human and natural resources, and as the country has many enemies, they leave no stone unturned to see Ethiopia stays there as it is because the world understands that Ethiopia's prosperity and development is somehow hard to accept for some entities.

Delivering the bi-weekly press briefing last week, the newly appointed Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Nebiat Getachew addressed some of the issues regarding the geopolitical dynamics of the Horn of Africa. Ethiopia's foreign policy prioritizes neighboring countries and anchors Ethiopia's pivotal role in the region's peace, stability and development. Ethiopia will not passively observe any attempts to destabilize the region as well as to thwart its development efforts.

The spokesperson reiterated that Ethiopia's diplomacy prioritizes peace, security, mutual development, and regional integration based on principle and reciprocity. Meanwhile, the country is monitoring the recent acts of its neighbors, he noted.

Ethiopia will avoid engaging in hostile rhetoric aimed at distorting its focus. However, we will not only continue

monitoring actions in neighboring countries affecting Ethiopia's national interest but respond, Nebiat noted, reaffirming Ethiopia's commitment to peaceful resolution of disputes and regional cooperation.

On top of that, having a stay with a local media, veteran diplomat Ambassador Tirunch Zena disclosed that the current antagonizing approach by leaders of Somalia is disgraceful and a total denial of Ethiopia that has contributed hugely to maintaining their country's statehood.

The diplomat further stated that Somalia is currently pursuing unprecedented moves and negative rhetoric against Ethiopia by inviting outside powers that are seeking geopolitical influence. Following these narrow calculations, many geopolitical experts have been expressing concerns that the hostility stands to jeopardize the well-earned stability for which Ethiopia has sacrificed enormously.

"When Somalia disintegrated into factions, it is Ethiopia which has done everything for the statehood of that country and rebuilt it," Tirunch recalled, adding that Ethiopia's contributions inherently emanates from its foreign policy that gives utmost importance to the neighboring countries.

"Of course, every country gives priority to neighboring countries in its foreign policy. But in the case of Ethiopia, there are things which are a bit different. Because significant numbers of citizens of neighboring countries like Somalia, Eritrea and Djibouti, they also reside in Ethiopia."

Similarly, the incumbent leadership of Somalia is now disgracefully instigating negative propaganda against Ethiopia and inviting other countries to destabilize the already turbulent East African region.

Taye Atskeselassie, Ethiopia's Foreign Minister, also addressed those concerns and warned against the dangerous consequences of such rhetoric.

"Collusion with forces hostile to peace in this region is short-sighted and counterproductive. Ethiopia remains vigilant in monitoring developments that could threaten our national security. The well-being and prosperity of our country are closely tied to the peace and development of our neighbors," said.

All in all, the Horn of Africa and the entire world know Ethiopia's way and unwavering commitment towards ensuring peace and stability in the Horn. The recent act of criminalizing Ethiopia and tarnishing its name emanated from the unconscious mind of those who forget what Ethiopia did to the region. Those actors who work on defamation have no ground to do so as they did nothing for the peace and stability of the region.

Society

Festivals for sustainable tourism development

BY LEULSEGED WORKU

Cultural and religious festivals are one platform that helps promote a certain community's social and cultural values, defining their unique identities. These events, because they have the potential to portray the real values and norms of a given society that are passed down from generation to generation, including their inimitable way of life, their cultural costumes, food, and rituals, get together people from different backgrounds, promote cultural understanding between and among different groups, and foster a sense of cohesion.

What is more, cultural and religious festivals are crucial in economic stimulation for local communities and the country generally. By creating jobs for citizens and business people engaged in the tourism industry such as hotel, transport, food preparation, and the artifacts sectors, as well as increasing the influx of a large number of tourists from the four corners of the world, it generates a high amount of foreign currency.

The first month of the Ethiopian year, *Meskerem*, (September) is one of the times that several street festivals are celebrated warmly and colorfully. Among the other festivals marked on September, *Enkutatash*, (Ethiopians New Year festival), *Demera*, a celebration marked on the eve of *Meskel*, (The True Findings of the Cross in which Jesus was crucified), and the actual *Meskel* festival, *Irreechaa*, (The Thanksgiving festival of the Oromo people) are some.

Currently, Ethiopia, while these unique cultural and religious street festivals are just around the corner, is preparing for a large influx of local and foreign tourists

As the Ministry of Tourism recently stated, various preparations were carried out and finalized to raise the experiences of international visitors flocking to the country to partake in the upcoming celebrations (*Demera*, *Meskel* and *Irreechaa* festivals) more exciting and unforgettable, as well as to lengthen their stay.

According to the Ministry, numerous packages were prepared to extend the length of tourists' stay coming from different countries to Ethiopia. This initiative aims to provide visitors with a more enriching, notable experience and promote Ethiopia's remarkable, unique cultural and religious festivals.

The decision to lengthen the stay of visitors also aims to foster a deeper appreciation for the local culture and traditions. By allowing tourists to spend more time in the country, the Ministry hopes to encourage them to explore the country's tourist destinations-historical sites and natural wonders, beyond the immediate festivities. This initiative not only benefits tourists but also allows local businesses to thrive, contributing to the overall economic growth of the tourism sector.

State Minister of Tourism, Seleshi Girma, recently shared insights with ENA regarding the nation's rich array of natural and man-made tourist attractions. According to the State Minister, Ethiopia has not fully benefited from



Demera celebration



Celebration of Irreechaa

its tourism potential at the desired level due to a lack of adequate infrastructure. Seleshi highlighted the pressing need for improvements in tourism facilities to ensure that the country can benefit from its diverse blessings meaningfully.

Following the recent reform, the government has given due attention to the tourism sector and designated it as one of the five basic pillars of the Ethiopian economy. As a result, various initiatives that advance the sector have been introduced and implemented massively. According to Girma, efforts are not only focused on developing new tourism destinations across the nation; but also on enhancing the safety of the existing ones and making them more comfortable for visitors. This dual approach aims to create a more appealing environment for tourists and stimulate growth in the industry.

Mentioning that September is a vibrant month in which several religious and non-religious festivals are celebrated, Girma noted that this season attracts a high number of foreign visitors. For this reason, he stressed the importance of celebrating these unique Ethiopian cultural and religious festivals in a manner that preserves their values thereby promoting Ethiopia's rich heritage to visitors coming from different countries around the world, aside from creating a deeper cultural exchange and understanding.

The government, aside from making public

cultural and religious festivities an indication of peace and unity, has also designed holiday package services that enable visitors to lengthen their stay.

To this end, the Ministry joining hands with states and actors of the sector is working aggressively to promote Ethiopia's tourist attractions situated across the country and enhance their visibility.

Looking ahead, Girma also announced ambitious goals for the tourism sector, revealing a target to attract over one million foreign tourists across the world in the current Ethiopian budget year. Various activities are being carried out to lengthen the stay of guests who may come to Ethiopia for entertainment, conferences, exhibitions, or any other purposes.

Highlighting the activities carried out in promoting Ethiopia's tourism resources in various international events; the State Minister affirmed that efforts exerted to expand Ethiopia's tourism revenue at the international level will be further strengthened and continued in the coming years to position the country as a key player in the global tourism market.

These efforts align with the government's broader strategy to boost tourism and position the country as a premier travel destination. With the ongoing recovery from the impacts of the global pandemic, attracting more visitors is

essential for revitalizing the tourism industry. The Ministry of Tourism is keen to capitalize on the celebrations of nation's cultural and religious festivals in September as a perfect opportunity to showcase the country's unique endowments and hospitality to a global audience.

In addition, the Ministry has devised various promotional activities to promote the country's attractions, boost visitors' experience and improve country's status at global tourism industry thereby gain substantial economic rewards. These activities include guided tours, cultural performances, and culinary events that highlight the rich heritage of the region.

By creating an immersive environment, the Ministry aims to leave a lasting impression on visitors, encouraging them to share their experiences with friends and family, thus amplifying the promotional efforts through word-of-mouth.

The experiences of several countries around the globe demonstrate that extending tourist stay can significantly benefit their tourism industries. As nations seek to recover and thrive in a post-pandemic environment, understanding the mechanisms that allow for longer visitor engagement can provide valuable insights. This strategy not only enhances the visitors' experience but also has profound economic implications for local communities.

As some sources indicate, countries such as Thailand and Spain serve as prime examples of the positive impact of extended tourist stays. In Thailand, the government's initiatives to promote longer visits have resulted in increased revenue for local businesses and the hospitality sector. By offering attractive packages, including extended-stay discounts and immersive cultural experiences, Thailand has successfully attracted tourists who are eager to explore its diverse attractions. The lengthen engagement allows visitors to delve deeper into local customs, cuisine, and landscapes, creating a richer travel experience.

Similarly, Spain has implemented strategies to encourage tourists to stay longer, particularly in regions like Catalonia and Andalusia. The country has capitalized on its rich history, vibrant culture, and stunning landscapes by promoting seasonal festivals and events that draw visitors throughout the year. By creating themed itineraries that showcase local cuisine, art, and history, Spain has effectively extended the average tourist stay, resulting in increased spending on accommodations, dining, and entertainment.

In this regard, the Ministry of Tourism's endeavor regarding to lengthen the stay of foreign visitors is a strategic move that yields promising outcomes not only to enrich the experiences of tourists but also supporting the local economy. With preparations in place, the upcoming celebrations are set to be remarkable events that showcase the best of the country's rich culture and hospitality. As the world emerges from challenging times, this initiative serves as a beacon of hope, inviting visitors to explore, connect, and celebrate in a beautiful setting.

International News

Global SME Finance Awards 2024: Kifiya Wins Product Innovation Award

Kifiya, the first Ethiopian FinTech to receive the prestigious Product Innovation of the Year award at the Global SME Finance Awards 2024, is establishing itself as a key player in financial and digital inclusion in Africa.

On September 17, 2024 in São Paulo, Brazil, Kifiya, an Ethiopian financial technology company, made history by becoming the first FinTech in the country to receive the prestigious Silver Award in the Product Innovation of the Year category at the Global SME Finance Awards 2024.

This distinction, organized by the International Finance Corporation (IFC) and the SME Finance Forum, honors institutions that have provided innovative solutions and have succeeded in expanding access to finance for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

The award highlights Kifiya's commitment to building a more inclusive future, both digitally and financially, through the use of artificial intelligence (AI) and cutting-edge technologies. "This award reflects our commitment to supporting small and medium enterprises (SMEs), as well as low- and middle-income populations in Africa through AI and data-driven solutions," Munir Duri, CEO and Founder of Kifiya, was quoted as saying in a statement received by APA on Thursday.

He also highlighted the impact of reforms initiated by Ethiopian Prime Minister



Munir-Duri-CEO-of-Kifiya-right-with-Mohamed-Gouled-IFC-VP-of-Industries-1024x729

Dr. Abiy Ahmed, which have enabled businesses like Kifiya to thrive in an environment conducive to innovation.

Bridging the financing gap

The SME sector in Africa is vital to economic growth, accounting for 90% of businesses and providing 60% of jobs. However, limited access to finance remains a major obstacle.

Kifiya is tackling this challenge by offering innovative digital platforms that facilitate SMEs' access to credit and financial services. In Ethiopia, where 50% of the

adult population lacks access to banking services, Kifiya's solutions have enabled thousands of SMEs to benefit from crucial financing, the document highlights.

One of Kifiya's major achievements is its partnership with the Cooperative Bank of Oromia, which has enabled nearly 300,000 SMEs to access over \$100 million in unsecured credit through a digital lending platform. This innovation has strengthened financial inclusion, fostered the stability of local businesses and contributed to Ethiopia's economic development, its

promoters congratulate.

Innovation for SMEs

Kifiya continues to innovate with its AgTech platform, which helps over 1.5 million smallholder farmers in Ethiopia access credit, agricultural inputs, markets and climate risk insurance. To date, over \$10 million worth of agricultural inputs have been distributed to farmers.

Kifiya's technology is also reaching other sectors, including transportation and insurance. Its Mobility as a Service (MaaS) solution facilitates the booking of eco-friendly travel, while its Insurtech platform offers affordable microinsurance products to protect low-income populations from financial risks.

Kifiya is committed to continuing to innovate to address the challenges of financial inclusion in Africa. With the IMF projecting GDP growth of 4.0% for Sub-Saharan Africa in 2025 and the population expected to reach 1.9 billion by 2050, Kifiya's technology solutions are well positioned to play a critical role in this economic transformation.

By closing the \$400 billion financing gap and opening new markets for Africa's 44 million SMEs and smallholder farmers, Kifiya is establishing itself as a key leader in the digital financial services sector.

Source: ARD/te/Sf/APA

Africa's future hinges on youth leadership, says ECA's Gatete

NEW YORK (ECA) - The Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), Claver Gatete, has emphasized the need for Africa's youth to play a central role in shaping the continent's future. During a meeting on "Transforming Africa with Youth-Driven Solutions" in New York on September 20, he called for concerted efforts to unlock the potential of Africa's youth for sustainable growth.

"Africa's youth are not just the future; they are the present driving force of our continent, and they must have a decisive role in shaping our pact for the future," said Mr. Gatete during the session held ahead of the Summit of the Future under the theme "Transforming Africa with Youth-Driven Solutions."

With Africa expected to account for 42% of the global youth population by 2030, the ECA Executive Secretary highlighted that the continent's success, and that of the world, is deeply intertwined with the contributions of its young people.

Despite this demographic advantage, Mr. Gatete acknowledged the significant

challenges facing Africa's youth, particularly in accessing employment opportunities. He pointed to high unemployment rates, an education system misaligned with labor market needs, and insufficient investment in skills development.

"The reality is stark: without urgent investments in education, skills development, and especially digital capabilities, Africa's young population may struggle to reach its full potential," he warned.

Central to Mr. Gatete's message was the transformative power of digitalization. He outlined the potential of Africa's digital economy, projected to reach \$75 billion by 2025, and noted that artificial intelligence is expected to contribute \$1.2 trillion to Africa's GDP by 2030. However, he cautioned that unlocking these opportunities requires significant investment.

"We must seize the opportunities presented by the Global Digital Compact," he stressed, emphasizing the urgent need to bridge Africa's digital

divide. Currently, only 37% of the continent's population has access to the internet, with the gap disproportionately affecting women.

Mr. Gatete also spotlighted the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) as a major driver of economic growth and youth empowerment. He emphasized the importance of leveraging Africa's comparative advantages across sectors like agriculture, manufacturing, and services to create regional value chains.

"We cannot overemphasize the unprecedented opportunities in regional integration, digitalization, and green energy development," he remarked, pointing to the AfCFTA as a catalyst for job creation and economic transformation.

On education, he urged governments and policymakers to prioritize investments in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), and vocational training. "Investments in STEM and TVET are non-negotiable for building the productive capabilities of young people and ensuring the competitiveness

of our countries."

Mr. Gatete stated that equipping youth with the right skills is essential to ensuring they thrive in the modern workforce.

While celebrating the resilience and innovation of Africa's youth, he cautioned that inaction could undermine their potential. "It would be unforgivable if they are shortchanged because of the actions we fail to take today," said Mr. Gatete, who reiterated ECA's commitment to supporting Africa's youth in their pursuit of socio-economic progress.

"Together, we can shape a future where African youth lead the continent towards a better, more equitable world."

As Africa prepares for the outcomes of the Summit of the Future, Mr. Gatete's remarks serve as a clear call to action: Africa's young people must lead the charge, driving innovation, accountability, and sustainable progress for the continent and beyond.

Source: UNECA

Planet Earth

Ethiopia's green development spurs cooperation in combatting climate change

BY GIRMACHEW GASHAW

Now is the time to invest in the environment. Even though Africa is not contributing to the ever-increasing climate change and related impacts, the continent is highly affected by the toxic carbon emissions from Western big industries.

According to the Africa Natural Capital Atlas, Africa holds 8 percent of the world's natural gas, 12 percent of its oil reserves, and 30 percent of global mineral deposits. Its fisheries are valued at over 24 billion USD, and it contains more than 60 percent of the world's undeveloped arable land. Mensur emphasized the importance of having a unified and common position on the environmental challenges that the continent is facing.

Understanding the diverse impact it would have on the livelihood of human beings, Ethiopia has been undertaking various significant afforestation tasks by mobilizing the public at large. This has enabled the country to plant a total of 32.5 billion saplings over the past years.

Planting tree seedlings of various kinds is not a new phenomenon for the government and people of Ethiopia; it is a culture nurtured by every government and its people. To verify this, one can simply visit any house in Ethiopia and observe the eye-catching green plants that adorn them.

Ethiopia's Green Legacy initiative aims to combat climate change, restore biodiversity, and ensure sustainable development. The initiative involves the mass planting of billions of trees across the country.

The environmental rehabilitation and protection conducted every year by an average of 20 million citizens in Ethiopia set the groundwork for massive tree planting. The campaign, conducted annually, has helped retain topsoil in various regions of the country and contribute to the reduction of soil erosion and landslides during the rainy season.

Understanding the necessity of working together to combat climate change, Ethiopia, since the early period of the initiative, has focused on regionalizing the Green Legacy initiative. Apart from undertaking various deeds locally, Ethiopia has sent its youth to share the country's massive plantation experience and promote tree planting in different African countries by planting seedlings.

The youth planted trees in every country they visited and shared Ethiopia's experiences in mobilizing the masses to plant billions of trees. They were ambassadors of their country, deployed to strengthen fraternity with the people of Africa to enhance the strong bonds of Ethiopia with the people and countries of



Africa.

Ethiopia is setting an example for the rest of the world in planting seedlings for green development, which is key to combating climate change. As the problem is a global issue, the solution requires working together, and Ethiopia shows its commitment to working with its neighbors and the African continent as a whole to take meaningful action to combat climate change.

This journey in Ethiopia goes beyond planting trees; it is a journey of planting everlasting fraternity. The youth are ambassadors of Ethiopia, sent to strengthen brotherhood and friendship with our African brothers and sisters. The seedlings they plant in these countries are not simply trees; they symbolize planting fraternity and friendship that help make diplomatic relations everlasting.

Though the Ethiopian youth journey symbolizes Green Diplomacy, its aim is to strengthen people-to-people relations, fraternity, and cooperation, standing together and promoting Pan-Africanism. The goal of Green Diplomacy is to integrate and connect Africa for mutual development, strengthening African fraternity and promoting Pan-Africanism for the development and prosperity of Africa and its people.

Africa can achieve its dreams by synergizing resources, knowledge, and ideas, and the goal of Green Diplomacy initiated by the Ethiopian youth is to realize this approach for the development of Africa by strengthening relations among African nations to achieve integration and cooperation. This new initiative is a historic event to strengthen African fraternity and promote the green legacy across Africa.

Nowadays, climate change is not just a single issue; it has become a political, economic, and diplomatic issue as it threatens the survival of all living things on this planet. Understanding this, Ethiopia invests maximum efforts in combating climate change and taking necessary actions.

Taking timely actions to combat climate change at home is one thing; expanding and advancing this initiative to Africa is an additional blessing. This mission is something special as it combines green legacy, fraternity, diplomacy, and cooperation for common development, strengthening public diplomacy, green initiatives, planting permanent fraternity, and enhancing diplomatic relations.

The Ethiopian youth have already started arriving in countries as per the schedule. On Wednesday, the Ethiopian youth delegation arrived in Juba, South Sudan. Similarly,

on Thursday, youths arrived in Khartoum, Sudan, and Nairobi, Kenya. They plant seedlings, promote tree planting in the countries they visit, and hold discussions with youth representatives.

Ethiopia has reaffirmed its unwavering commitment to advancing Africa's common position on environmental-related affairs, according to the Ministry of Planning and Development.

Mensur Dessie, the Environment and Climate Change Agreement Strategic Partnership Head at the Ministry of Planning and Development, stated that Ethiopia will work towards advancing the common environmental issues of the African continent.

Ethiopia has been making utmost efforts towards realizing the continent's stands on the environment.

He also emphasized that having a unified and common position on the environmental challenges facing the continent is of paramount importance.

Ethiopia will play its role in maintaining a unified voice and common positions to address the common challenges of Africa in this regard. Mensur also renewed Ethiopia's firm stand to intensify its critical role in the priorities of the continent.