



The Ethiopian Herald

Vol. LXXXI No 027 11 October 2024 - Tikimt 1, 2017 **Friday** Price Birr 10.00

Despite challenges, coffee sector growing: Premier

ADDIS ABABA (ENA) - Coffee is the pillar of Ethiopia's economy as the sector is growing despite many challenges, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) remarked.

"Coffee is the pillar of our economy, and the progress we have made in its production reflects that," PM Abiy wrote on X.

"We have accomplished the remarkable feat of producing 1 million tons, and domestic consumption has also risen significantly. Despite the many challenges we face, we continue to achieve much more in the coffee sector."

Abiy called upon everyone involved to play their part in further advancing this vital industry.

Over the past six years, Ethiopia planted 8.5 billion coffee seedlings, demonstrating its

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Ethiopia Economic Overview: Zooming in on education, health

BY MESERET BEHAILU

Ethiopia has achieved significant advancements in education and health development over the past year, as highlighted by newly elected President Taye Atske-Selassie during the joint session of the 4th tenure of the House of People's Representatives and the House of Federation.

He announced the construction of 5,966 new schools and repairs to 15,511 existing ones nationwide. A total of 21,477 schools are now operational, with 22.7 million secondary school textbooks published and distributed. Pre-primary school

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Amb. Nebiat Getachew

MoFA tells citizens in Lebanon to register for repatriation

•Recognizes UN Human Rights Council membership important

BY YESUF ENDRIS

ADDIS ABABA – Over 3,000 Ethiopians have registered to return home as the situation in Lebanon continues to deteriorate, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) announced. The ministry is urging Ethiopian citizens to assess the digital platforms to register for repatriation.

In his bi-weekly briefing yesterday, MoFA Spokesperson Ambassador Nebiat Getachew

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Experts voice support for Nile Basin Commission

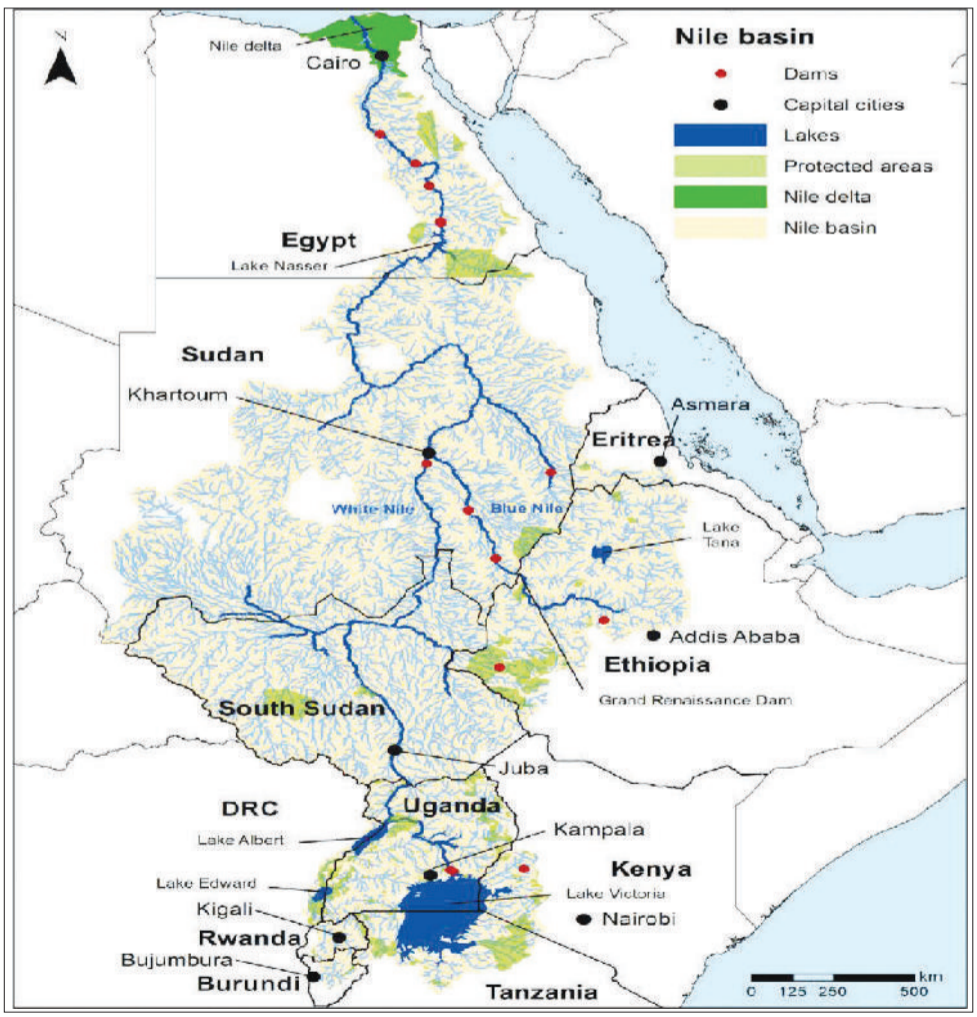
BY HAILE DEMEKE

ADDIS ABABA- The establishment of the Nile Basin Commission (NBC) is crucial for ensuring equitable water utilization among Nile riparian states, according to water researchers.

In a recent interview with the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) a water researcher and lecturer at Addis Ababa University Prof. Yacob Arsano emphasized that this initiative aims to move away from outdated colonial-era agreements that have historically favored downstream countries.

Prof. Arsano noted that the Nile Basin Initiative (NBI), which includes 11 riparian countries, is transitioning to the NBC to promote shared benefits among all member states. Currently, six countries have ratified the pact, which is designed to ensure equitable and reasonable utilization of Nile water resources that have long been dominated by downstream nations. He stated, "The commission is set to be implemented soon as the majority of states ratify the agreement, aiming for shared benefits without causing harm to

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Samuel Tolosa

Hospital stresses creating comfortable env't for mental health

•Marks 'World Mental Health Day'

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

ADDIS ABABA - Preserving comfortable environment in workplaces is critical to protect employees' mental health, Amanuel Mental Specialized Hospital said.

Amanuel Mental Specialized Hospital yesterday marked the 'World Mental Health Day' aiming to create awareness about mental health impacts.

Speaking at the occasion, Amanuel Mental Specialized Hospital Emergency Department Director Lulu Bekana (MD) said that protecting employees' mental and physical health in working places is a responsibility of institutions, employees' representatives or associations and concerned bodies. The effort needs creating healthy and comfortable environment at working places.

Approached by *The Ethiopian Herald* Outpatients Department Head Samuel Tolosa said that many employees with mental disorders have not been receiving medical treatment due to various reasons. Several employees have been receiving mental health treatment and getting quick recovery aside from well performing in workplaces in Ethiopia.

Mental health problem has been resulting low performance in workplaces. As a result, it has been causing economic burdens for a country, family and community. The effort requires preserving mental and psychological safety of individuals in working places or areas. The task is a responsibility of all stakeholders.

Furthermore, protecting employees mental health requires setting policy frameworks at working areas, changing the existing managerial system, expanding sporting facilities, preparing various refreshments and others, he said.

As to him, the community has low level of awareness. Some 10 to 15% of people are victims of mental health in workplace and 90% of them don't receive medical treatment globally. So, they are not effective in performing their tasks. Most of the employees have been working in uncomfortable environment particularly in developing countries including Ethiopia.

According to documents, globally, an estimated 12 billion working days are lost every year to depression and anxiety at a cost of 1 trillion USD per year in productivity loss. There are effective actions to prevent mental health risks at work, protect and promote mental health at work, and support workers with mental health conditions.

Association working on nurturing vibrant women entrepreneurs

BY ASHENAFI ANIMUT

ADDIS ABABA – The Ethiopian Women Empowerment Association (EWEA) said that it has been providing capacity building trainings and women-owned investment landscapes to bring about competent women entrepreneurs.

In an exclusive interview with *The Ethiopian Herald*, EWEA President Engidaye Eshete said that the association has been offering advocacy, credit access services and enabling business environment to enhance women entrepreneurs' competitiveness and ensure beneficiary.

Engidaye further stated that the association collaborating with partners has also been providing leadership and entrepreneur trainings via its 270 branches and 18 giant associations across the country.

According to her, the revised macroeconomic policy would help change the past scenarios and open new venues for the entrepreneurs to promote their products, digital literacy which in turn spurs nation's economy.

She said, "It has also identified potential gaps in areas of export products in terms of quality, price and quantity with value addition to the international market. Similarly, access to finance, gender gap in agricultural productivity, and market linkages are the identified bottlenecks for the development of Ethiopian women entrepreneurs."

Moreover, the association signed MoU with the agriculture ministry with the view of addressing their export trade gaps



and equipping them with the necessary agricultural inputs for mechanized farming.

To date, it has crafted a 10-Year Strategic Plan which embraces women digital inclusion, women's financial reliability and their entrepreneurial success, she pointed out.

She said, adding that recent studies unveiled that the entrepreneurs are encountering information and awareness hurdles; therefore, it is aggressively working to address these challenges and reinforce their outreach not only in the country but also in the region and the world at large.

For his part, GIZ Project Team Leader Ashebir Demie stated that by strengthening rural value chain (SRVC) initiative, GIZ is providing technical and organizational capacity of business associations to strengthen the advocacy, evidence-based public private dialogue capabilities of private sectors in agribusiness.

He also reiterated that the project has given special heed to women engaging in business

association by providing various training such as advocacy, leadership and membership development.

He added that the project has also been providing trade fair facilities including tents for exhibition to help display their products.

Furthermore, financial and technical assistance conduct investment climate surveys and organize public private dialogue workshops focusing on the business enabling environment of women-owned business, Ashebir noted.

Apart from supporting the association's 10 year strategic plan, he emphasized that the project has been actively involved in website and digital membership database development.

EWEA, established in 2007 with the aim to address the challenges peculiar to women entrepreneurs' in Ethiopia, has since been actively working towards propelling women entrepreneurs in to economic, social and political spheres of influence.

MoTRI, KOICA ink MoU to improve agricultural products' competitiveness

BY STAFF REPORTER

ADDIS ABABA – Ministry of Trade and Regional Integration (MoTRI) of Ethiopia and Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to launch the Ethiopian national quality management capacity enhancement project.

The MoU was signed by Kassahun Gofe (PhD), MoTRI Minister and the KOICA Ethiopia Office Country Director Han Deog Cho, aimed at improving the competitiveness of Ethiopia's agricultural and processed agricultural products through the development of national quality management systems.

The project will be implemented from 2024 to 2028, and focus on three core areas, enhancing testing, inspection, and calibration capacity; strengthening quality control regulation implementation; and improving the country's external regulation response mechanisms, it was stated.

By addressing these key factors, the project seeks to bolster Ethiopia's ability to meet international quality standards, thereby increasing its market competitiveness. KOICA will contribute a grant of up to 10 million USD towards the project, which will be implemented in Addis Ababa. The



Ethiopian government will also commit resources to ensure the successful execution and sustainability of the project.

This collaboration underscores the strong partnership between South Korea and Ethiopia, a relationship that has been enriched through various development and social programs. The signing of this MoU marks another milestone in these

nations' shared commitment to agricultural development and trade integration.

Both MoTRI and KOICA expressed optimism about the project's impact and reaffirmed their commitment to working together to enhance Ethiopia's agricultural sector, improve quality management standards, and foster long-term economic growth.

News



Mayor Adanech wins Seoul Smart City 2024 best leadership award

ADDIS ABABA (FBC) – The Mayor of Addis Ababa City Administration, Adanech Abiebie, has received the Seoul Smart City Prize 2024 Best Leadership Award, an international award that honors innovation and excellence in smart city development.

The Seoul Smart City Prize is designed to promote an innovative yet inclusive smart city model that looks after underprivileged groups in the era of the Fourth Industrial Revolution that is driven by information and communication technology.

The organizers stated that this year, the competition has been fierce, with cities, organizations, and leaders from across the globe presenting cutting-edge solutions that enhance everyday urban living. The winners have been selected across three key categories: Tech-Innovacity, Human-Centricity, and Leadership.

In this regard, Mayor Adanech of Addis Ababa has been declared the winner in the

“Leadership” category among 72 countries and 115 peer city administration mayors in the Smart City Movement.

The mayor’s office indicated that the organizers of the award declared that the mayor was selected for the award owing to her commitment to improving the lives of her city’s residents and modernizing its infrastructure.

Regarding the award, Mayor Adanech Abebe said that her administration is deeply grateful for this recognition. “The 2024 Seoul Smart City Leadership Award is a testament to the collective efforts of our city and the invaluable participation and coordination of our people. The achievement belongs to all of us,” the Mayor noted on her social media page.

“I want to reaffirm that it is you, the residents of our city, who stand with us and serve as the driving force behind our development and progress,” she added.

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enrollment has reached 89.4%, and 7.5 million students are benefiting from school feeding programs.

The “Education for Generation” campaign has successfully raised approximately 27.3 billion Birr, encompassing monetary contributions, knowledge sharing, energy support, and material donations. The government has also prioritized curriculum development and infrastructure reforms to address previous educational challenges.

In the health sector, President Taye reported that 80% of children have received vaccinations, and 65% of households now have access to family planning services. The percentage of mothers receiving prenatal care has risen to 66%, with 72% now assisted by trained professionals.

The President outlined ongoing initiatives to transform urban centers into prosperous hubs. Metropolitan areas are seeing new developments, including vehicular roads, underground pedestrian paths, bicycle tracks, and dedicated bus and taxi loading zones. In Addis Ababa, the corridor development project has created over 43,000 jobs and added extensive public entertainment facilities.

Finance Minister Ahmed Shedio noted that macroeconomic reforms aim to stabilize the economy, maintaining that Ethiopia’s economic and social conditions are stable, with minimal inflation pressures, as verified by the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

President Taye emphasized that sustainable development remains a priority, focusing on climate-resilient agriculture, fiscal policy reform, and the expansion of the



President Taye Atske-Selassie

construction and service sectors. He projected an 8.4% economic growth for the country, with government revenue expected to reach 1.5 trillion Birr this fiscal year. The export sector is anticipated to grow significantly, with value-added commodity income expected to reach 5 billion USD and total export revenues projected at 10 billion USD.

He stated, “Through the introduction of macroeconomic reforms and the second phase of the Homegrown Economic Reform, we are confident in achieving our growth targets.”

Looking forward, the government is committed to fostering an inclusive economic environment that encourages private sector participation. By leveraging local resources and attracting foreign investment, Ethiopia aims to create more jobs and improve living standards, further strengthening its resilience and positioning it as a regional economic leader.

Experts voice...

downstream nations.”

For years, Egypt has been using the Nile River primarily for its own benefit, often at the expense of upper riparian countries that contribute significantly to the river’s water supply. The scholar pointed out that Egypt’s accusations against Ethiopia regarding Nile water usage are based on outdated colonial agreements that grant Egypt absolute control over this vital resource.

He criticized Egypt’s resistance to the

NBC, arguing that it seeks to maintain colonial-era privileges that exclude upper riparian countries. In contrast, Ethiopia has consistently expressed its intention to use the river equitably and reasonably, without causing significant harm to downstream nations. Accordingly, Ethiopia has called on Egypt to join the Cooperative Framework Agreement (CFA), which advocates for equitable resource utilization among all riparian states. With six countries now

having ratified the CFA, the minimum requirement for forming the Nile Basin Commission has been met.

Adding his perspective, Adama Science and Technology University Survey Engineering Lecturer Tilahun Erduno (PhD-Eng.) reinforced Prof. Arsano’s statements, calling the CFA a significant milestone for sustainable development and equitable water utilization. The academician also condemned Egypt’s attempts to exert veto

power over Nile water development as unacceptable and contrary to international law.

The NBI, signed in May 2010, aims to foster equitable and reasonable utilization of the Nile among riparian countries. The upcoming establishment of the NBC is expected to reduce conflicts among member states by ensuring inclusive benefits and avoiding the colonial agreements that have historically favored downstream nations.

MoFA tells citizens...

said that a national committee, organized to evacuate vulnerable migrants, is working with local authorities to ensure a safe evacuation. So far, 51 citizens have been repatriated through Jordan and Egypt. Although the situation in Lebanon is alarming, the number of registered citizens remains limited, he noted.

“The government’s top priority is the evacuation of citizens in this situation,” Amb. Nebiat emphasized. The national committee is currently in Beirut to facilitate the identification and registration of Ethiopians for evacuation. Registration

is being conducted both digitally and in person. He advised vulnerable citizens to use the digital platform for registration.

“The committee is also facilitating the relocation of citizens until safe evacuation can be arranged. Many citizens are transported and relocated to relatively peaceful areas of Lebanon. Dialogue with local authorities and Ethiopian community members is ongoing,” he added.

The Spokesperson also briefed the media on Ethiopia’s recent election to the United Nations Human Rights Council.

“Ethiopia received 171 out of 193 votes in the election.”

Ethiopia’s role in the council will focus on advocating for the protection of civil, economic, and political human rights, particularly in developing countries. He stressed the need to improve the technical support and capacity-building provided to these countries.

This marks Ethiopia’s election for the council membership for third time in its history, the spokesperson added.

Despite challenges...

commitment to growth, he affirmed.

For the Premier, efficient logistics are essential to the country’s coffee value chain, and value addition remains a crucial focus.

“Moving forward, we must dedicate ourselves to hard work and innovation to sustain and expand our successes,” PM Abiy noted.

Opinion

Understanding thesis, antithesis and synthesis in Ethiopia: A Path to effective dialogue

BY LAKACHEW ATINAFU

Ethiopia, a nation rich in history, culture, and diversity, stands at a crossroads, facing challenges that threaten its social fabric. The concepts of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis, rooted in dialectical reasoning, can provide a framework for understanding and addressing these challenges.

Ethiopia's historical narrative is a tapestry woven with threads of ancient civilizations, resilient cultures, and a strong sense of identity. The country's unique history includes the Aksumite Empire, the Solomonic dynasty, the Geda system, which is the oldest democratic system of the Oromo people, and local governances of different ethnicities, among others, and their role as symbols of African independence and self-governance. These rich heritages serve as the thesis, representing Ethiopia's pride and the foundation of its national identity.

However, this rich history is often overshadowed by contemporary issues, including ethnic extremism, political strife and economic challenges. The thesis reflects not only past achievements but also the aspirations of a diverse population striving for unity and progress.

In stark contrast to this proud history, Ethiopia faces significant challenges that can be viewed as the antithesis to its historical narrative. Ethnic conflicts driven by extremists and historical enemies of the nation, political marginalization, and economic disparities have led to a sense of division among various groups. The recent civil unrest and humanitarian crises highlight the urgent need for dialogue and reconciliation.

The antithesis showcases the realities that many Ethiopians live with daily—fear, displacement, and a growing sense of disenfranchisement. The gap between the ideal of a unified nation and the reality of fragmentation is widening, creating a pressing need for transformation.

The synthesis emerges when the thesis and antithesis are reconciled, offering a pathway to healing and progress. To move toward a more harmonious Ethiopia, several strategies can be implemented:

Creating platforms for open dialogue among diverse groups is essential. This includes engaging youth, women, and marginalized communities in discussions about national identity and coexistence. Such forums can help bridge divides and foster understanding.

Incorporating educational curricula that celebrate Ethiopia's diversity can nurture respect and appreciation among different ethnic groups. Cultural exchange programs can further promote unity by highlighting shared values and common goals.

Implementing transparent and accountable governance structures is crucial. This includes promoting fair representation of all ethnic groups in political processes, ensuring that every voice is heard and valued. Targeted economic initiatives that address disparities across regions can help reduce tensions. Investing in infrastructure, education, and job creation in underserved areas will promote equitable development and foster a sense of belonging.

Establishing National Dialogue Commission (NDC) that address past grievances through correcting single narratives and promoting grand narrative for the nation's common good is a remarkable achievement the government secured so far. The NDC can facilitate platforms where Ethiopians from all corners take part



Diversity in Ethiopia is a spice of unity

in the dialogue via their representatives for the purpose of reaching on one common understanding. Besides, transitional justice provides a platform for victims and perpetrators to share their stories, fostering empathy and understanding.

Ethiopia's mysterious magnetism lies in its rich history and cultural diversity. By acknowledging past injustices and working towards a more inclusive future, the nation can transform its challenges into opportunities for growth and unity. Embracing the dialectical approach of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis will not only rehabilitate the nation but also restore its standing as a beacon of hope and resilience in the region.

As Ethiopians embark on this journey, they hold the power to shape their collective destiny, ensuring that the beauty and strength of their nation endure for generations to come.

Ethiopia often referred to as the "Cradle of Humanity," boasts a rich and diverse cultural heritage that reflects a history of coexistence among numerous ethnic groups. This interwoven cultural tapestry has not only shaped the nation's identity but has also served as a bulwark against foreign aggression throughout its storied past. Thus, it is essential to the elements of Ethiopian culture, the historical context of coexistence, and how this unity has been pivotal in shielding the nation from external threats.

Ethiopia is home to over 80 distinct ethnic groups, each contributing unique traditions, languages, and customs. This diversity is a hallmark of Ethiopian culture, characterized by the nation's linguistic landscape incredibly varied, with languages such as Amharic, Oromo, Tigrinya, and Somali among others spoken across different regions. This multilingual environment fosters communication and cultural exchange, allowing for a blend of traditions that enrich the national identity.

Ethiopia is known also for its religious diversity, predominantly comprising Christianity and Islam, along with various indigenous beliefs. This pluralism has historically encouraged tolerance and coexistence, as communities engage in cooperative practices and mutual respect.

Ethiopian cuisine, characterized by unique dishes like injera and doro wat, kitfo with kocho, chechebsa, tihilo, and many others reflects the cultural diversity of the country. Shared meals often occur during festivals and communal gatherings, reinforcing social bonds among different ethnic groups.

Ethiopian art, music, and dance are integral to

cultural identity. Traditional instruments such as the kirar, kebero, flute and masenqo, along with vibrant dances, celebrate the unique heritage of various communities, fostering a sense of unity through shared artistic expression.

Ethiopia's history is marked by periods of coexistence that highlight the ability of its diverse populations to live in harmony despite differences. Key moments in this chronology include:

The Aksumite Empire was a melting pot of cultures and religions, facilitating trade and diplomatic relations with neighboring regions. This early state laid the groundwork for a national identity that embraced diversity.

Under the Solomonic dynasty, Ethiopia experienced relative stability, allowing various ethnic groups to coexist peacefully. The dynasty's promotion of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church helped to unify the nation while respecting Islamic communities, particularly in the eastern regions.

Ethiopia's remarkable resistance against Italian colonization during the Battle of Adwa in 1896 exemplifies the strength derived from its diverse cultural fabric. Various ethnic groups united to defend their sovereignty, showcasing a collective identity that transcended ethnic boundaries.

Despite facing internal strife and external pressures, Ethiopia's cultural diversity has played a crucial role in fostering resilience. Efforts to promote dialogue and reconciliation among different groups have emerged in recent years, reinforcing the importance of unity in overcoming challenges.

Ethiopia's rich tapestry of culture has been instrumental in shielding the nation from foreign aggression. This resilience can be attributed to several factors: The shared experiences and collective identity forged through centuries of coexistence have fostered solidarity among ethnic groups. This unity has been crucial in mobilizing resources and manpower during times of conflict.

Ethiopia's cultural heritage has served as a diplomatic tool, enabling the country to build alliances with neighboring states and international communities. The emphasis on cultural exchange and understanding has helped mitigate potential conflicts.

The legacy of successful resistance against foreign invaders has instilled a strong sense of nationalism and pride among Ethiopians. This historical narrative serves as a reminder of the importance of unity in safeguarding the nation's sovereignty.

Common values rooted in mutual respect, hospitality, and communalism creates a strong social fabric that resists external pressures. Festivals and communal events reinforce these values, encouraging diverse groups to celebrate their identities together.

Ethiopia's interwoven cultural tapestry is a testament to the nation's rich history of coexistence. As the country navigates modern challenges, embracing this diversity will be paramount in fostering resilience against foreign interference. By continuing to strengthen bonds among its ethnic groups, Ethiopia can emerge as a unified force, safeguarding its sovereignty and enriching its cultural heritage for future generations.

The journey toward unity is ongoing, but with a foundation built on coexistence, shared values, and collective identity, Ethiopia can look forward to a future where its diverse cultures not only thrive but also serve as a source of strength and pride.

Creating a better picture among the international community is crucial for Ethiopia to enhance its global standing and foster positive relationships. Here are several key expectations and actions that could help achieve this goal:

Conflict Resolution: Engage in dialogue and reconciliation efforts to resolve internal conflicts, particularly in regions experiencing ethnic tensions.

Inclusive Governance: Keeping wide the political environment that includes all ethnic groups and promotes representation in decision-making processes to the grass root level.

Human Rights Protection: Uphold and protect human rights, ensuring that all citizens can express themselves freely and safely.

Accountability Mechanisms: Working hand in glove with the established independent bodies to investigate and address human rights abuses, ensuring accountability for violations.

Sustainable Development Initiatives: Focus on inclusive and sustainable economic growth that benefits all segments of society.

In a nutshell, while Ethiopia is accomplishing its homework on unity in diversity, the international community and Ethiopians in the Diaspora have to stretch their supportive hands to enable the country make its ambitions a success story.

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

Editorial

A firm commitment towards curtailing global crisis

Ethiopia is an inspiring model in the global effort against climate change, proving that developing countries can take the lead in implementing ambitious green projects and policies while maintain upward economic trajectory. The nation has embarked on an impressive journey towards green initiative, setting an example even for developed nations.

The country introduced the Climate Resilient Green Economy (CRGE) strategy, and the green legacy with the goal of attaining middle-income status by 2025 while simultaneously transitioning to a carbon-neutral economy. This ambitious plan underscores Ethiopia's acknowledgment of the intrinsic connection between economic progress and environmental sustainability. The CRGE focuses on vital sectors like agriculture, forestry, and energy, advocating for practices that improve productivity while preserving natural resources.

The focus on renewable energy is a key part of the country's climate strategy. The country has a high reliance on renewable energy, with hydroelectric power accounting for more than 90% of its electricity production. The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, which is on track to become one of Africa's largest hydroelectric projects, demonstrates Ethiopia's commitment to sustainable use of natural resources. Alongside hydroelectric power, Ethiopia is also putting resources into wind and solar energy initiatives to broaden its energy sources. These efforts not only decrease greenhouse gas emissions but also enhance energy security and accessibility for millions of Ethiopians, fostering comprehensive economic development.

The green legacy serves as an inspiring model for other nations, particularly in the Global South, illustrating that ambitious climate action is possible even in the face of development challenges. As the world grapples with the escalating impacts of climate change, Ethiopia's commitment to sustainable practices offers valuable lessons in resilience, innovation, and community engagement.

Ethiopia is expanding its energy sources by investing in wind and solar energy projects, in addition to hydroelectric power, with the goal of diversifying its energy mix. These projects aim to not only decrease greenhouse gas emissions but also improve energy security and accessibility for millions of Ethiopians, thereby fostering inclusive economic growth. Ethiopia has initiated one of the largest reforestation campaigns in history, acknowledging the crucial role forests play in addressing climate change.

The country has been hailed by many countries as being the frontrunner on combating climate change and building resilient economy. This week, Danish Ambassador commended the country's effort while vowing a joint cooperation to redress the growing predicament.

Danish Ambassador SuneKrogstrup emphasized that since 2012, Denmark has played a crucial role in advancing Ethiopia's climate-resilient green economy, focusing on initiatives designed to adapt to and mitigate climate impacts.

Ambassador Krogstrup highlighted Denmark's involvement in key programs that promote the sustainability of safety net initiatives, deliver humanitarian aid, and enhance climate adaptation strategies. A significant aspect of their support is the promotion of plant-smart agriculture, aimed at modernizing farming practices by reducing reliance on traditional methods, minimizing post-harvest losses, and increasing mechanization. This initiative has successfully improved wheat productivity, helping Ethiopia meet its national demand for this essential crop.

Denmark has partnered with Ethiopia on research initiatives aimed at developing effective strategies to mitigate climate change impacts. Ambassador Krogstrup stressed the urgency of the situation, noting that climate change poses significant risks, leading to increased humanitarian needs, job scarcity, and disruptions in food production. Additionally, the country has faced landslides exacerbated by climate conditions, complicating its challenges further.

The international community must recognize and support Ethiopia's efforts, understanding that the fight against climate change requires collective action. The country's approach to combating climate change strikes a balance between development and sustainability.



The Ethiopian Herald

Established in 1943

Published daily except Mondays
By The Ethiopian Press Agency

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Opinion

Nurturing the culture of peaceful power transition

BY GIRMACHEW GASHAW

Being a servant leader is a once-in-a-lifetime chance. If someone is put in a certain role to serve the people who chose him/her well, they may be able to stay in that position for a limited period. On the other hand, dictators want to hold onto power until the end of their lives or be deposed by their heirs.

However, a peaceful transition is the anticipated result following an election in a stable, established democracy. Strong democratic institutions and norms, including opposition parties' readiness to act as devoted opposition, are necessary for peaceful transitions.

You are likely to transfer power to chosen individuals after serving them with appropriate and efficient service for a certain period of time. On the other hand, dictators want to hold onto power until the end of their lives or be deposed by their heirs.

The most expected outcome from peaceful political transitions is maintaining peaceful momentum and staying sustainable. Political power, which comes from the general public, shouldn't be extended by an official's wishes and interests without the approval of the people who elected them to a temporary position. To put it briefly, this is a dictatorship.

As a continent, several African nations have been suffering from autocratic rulers who are unwilling to hand over political authority to their successors. They may do this by rigging ballot boxes or obtaining votes they do not earn to reverse election results win an election and maintain their position.

Last Monday, the former FDRE president Sahle Work Zewdie transferred power to the newly elected President Taye Atske-Selassie. This is a good practice to ensure sustainability in the political system and help the country to guarantee internal and horn peace.

This democratic practice is not considered a simple thing. As there is no nation built overnight, it is a practice that helps us democratic culture through experiencing such a wonderful culture. To strengthen the process, it is crucial to strengthen democratic institutions such as the House of Peoples' Representative, the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission, the Ethiopian Institute of the Ombudsman, the Office of the Federal Auditors General, the National Electoral Board of Ethiopia, the House of Federation, and so on.

Family is a basement of democratic culture. As it is a basic social organ, every individual has to practice democracy since childhood period and be free to exchange ideas, thoughts, and so on. However, as a society, we lack the understanding of this truth.

As we are practitioners of democracy,

A peaceful transition is the anticipated result following an election in a stable, established democracy. Strong democratic institutions and norms, including opposition parties' readiness to act as devoted opposition, are necessary for peaceful transitions

the essence of democracy should also be further developed in schools. Indeed, there are student parliaments in every school, and they are exercising democratic processes in the schools. This is an effort that should be sustainable until it is a well-developed culture that is acceptable by all segments of society.

On the other hand, to develop a culture of political power transfer, we need to have strong political parties that hold strong competitive ideas. Unfortunately, there are no strong and competitive political parties that have competitive ideas to compete with the existing ones. With the absence of strong political parties, it is difficult to think about democracy and power transitions from one party to the other.

On a larger scale, society in general has to practice the importance of reshuffling power within a group or transferring power from one political party to the other peacefully.

Building a culture of political transition is quite imperative in sustaining the political system or democracy in a given country, apart from maintaining the existing peace. As it requires continuous practice, the democratization process is not developed overnight. In this regard, developed countries that are better off in wealth and expertise should sit with us until we internalize a democratic culture.

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

Business & Economy

Development Partners pledged to support Ethiopia's economic reform

BY ABEBE WOLDEGIORGIS

For the last five years the government has been implementing a comprehensive and well-coordinated Home-Grown Economic Reform Agenda (HGERA) with the goal to safeguard macro-financial stability and rebalance and sustain economic growth.

The reform agenda builds on the achievements of the past decade in infrastructure and human capital developments. The primary objective of the agenda is to sustain economic growth through creating an economic environment supportive of higher private investment and structural transformation. It encompasses three key pillars at the macro-financial, structural, and sectorial levels. Macro-financial reforms aim to reduce the risks associated with public debt, reduce external vulnerabilities, arrest inflation, and enhance growth, investment, and export.

Recently, the Government in collaboration with the Development Partners Group (DPG), held a high-level meeting in Addis Ababa to discuss the country's ongoing macroeconomic reforms and their impact on fiscal and monetary policies.

This meeting represents a pivotal moment in Ethiopia's economic transformation, building on the progress of the HGERA, now entering its second phase.

Launched in 2019, the Home-Grown Economic Reform Agenda has been central to Ethiopia's strategy for addressing macroeconomic imbalances, promoting sustainable growth, and establishing the private sector as the key driver of development.

Notable progress has been made in reforming state-owned enterprises (SOEs), improving the investment climate, and enhancing domestic resource mobilization, according to Ministry of Finance.

With the launching of the second phase of Home-Grown Economic Reform Agenda, the government is intensifying its reform efforts to address deep-rooted challenges, including foreign exchange shortages, low productivity, and limited global competitiveness, it added.

A central aspect of this reform is the shift toward a market-based foreign exchange system, designed to revitalize the economy and stimulate growth. The government has also introduced robust fiscal and monetary policies to complement these reforms, with a focus on debt sustainability, pro-poor spending, and domestic revenue mobilization.

The fiscal strategy includes a commitment to limiting deficit financing through stringent provisions, while transitioning to an interest rate-based monetary policy framework designed to curb inflation and stimulate investment.

In her opening remarks, Semereta Sewasew, State Minister of Finance, emphasized the government's dedication to these reforms and highlighted the importance of Development Partners' technical and financial support.

"Our macroeconomic reforms are designed to address longstanding challenges, such as foreign exchange shortages and limited global competitiveness. We are committed to creating an inclusive, market-driven



Ethiopian government and development partners' joint meeting to discuss macroeconomic reforms

economy," she stated.

State Minister of Finance, Eyob Tekalign, for his part provided a detailed overview of HGER 2 and described it as a natural extension of the initial reform agenda.

"The first phase laid the foundation for Ethiopia's economic transformation, with GDP growth reaching 6.1% despite a multitude of internal and external shocks. HGERA builds on this progress, with a renewed focus on macroeconomic stability, productivity enhancement, and creating an environment conducive for private sector investment", he stated.

Furthermore, fiscal policy reforms are aimed at ensuring inclusive growth and supporting essential public spending in sectors such as health and education. The government has outlined a comprehensive strategy to boost domestic revenue mobilization, strengthen tax administration, and protect vulnerable populations through targeted subsidies and social programs.

Governor of the National Bank of Ethiopia, Mamo Mihretu, on his part highlighted the significant strides being made under the new monetary policy framework.

The transition to an interest rate-based policy, combined with the ongoing liberalization of the foreign exchange market, is expected to stabilize inflation, which has already decreased from 29.3% to 17%.

The government is also committed to eliminating foreign exchange surrender requirements and strengthening the financial sector to attract more foreign investment. The efforts towards streamlining monetary policies as well as financial sector development efforts have been discussed.

Governor Mamo also highlighted the important reforms undertaken within the National Bank to ensure the Bank's independence and competence.

The Deputy CEO of Ethiopian Investment Holdings, Meleket Taye, highlighted the significant reforms made on the State-Owned Enterprises as part of the HGERA.

She has emphasized on the importance of State-Owned Enterprises' reform agenda to contribute towards achieving the development aspirations of the country from the national priorities' perspective. The reform has been instrumental in that it has been put under the Macroeconomic reform perspective.

Representatives from key development

partners, including the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank (WB) and other bilateral partners expressed their continued support for Ethiopia's reform agenda.

They commended the government's approach in implementing these reforms and noted early positive outcomes, including improved public finance management, enhanced revenue mobilization, and reducing inflation.

Development partners have also raised issues such as improving peace and security, improving business climate, tax administration as well as the push towards enhancing pro-poor and social spending.

They have also highlighted the need for effective tax reform, civil service capacity building and system digitalization. In general, they praised the government's efforts towards such a historic reform and reaffirmed their commitment to supporting the reform agenda in various forms.

In his concluding remarks, Minister of Finance, Ahmed Shide acknowledged the vital role that development partners play in shaping and supporting the country's reforms across various sectors.

He stressed the government's commitment to addressing peace and security issues through national dialogues and to significantly increasing domestic resource mobilization. He called on all development partners to contribute to the reform efforts in diverse ways and to enhance their support for effective implementation.

The Minister further highlighted the need for increased development assistance for various programs and projects during this reform period. He reiterated the government's dedication to fostering a stable, inclusive economy that benefits all citizens.

Additionally, Ahmed suggested for a structured dialogue on the reform to ensure ongoing monitoring and review of progress in implementation. These reforms include, strengthening public finances through improving the efficiency of SOEs and privatization, gradually moving towards a flexible exchange rate regime to address external imbalances, strengthening the monetary policy framework with the objective to stabilize prices and support economic growth, and enhancing financial sector development and developing capital markets.

The structural reforms aim to address bottlenecks inhibiting private sector growth through stepping up reforms to ease the

constraints to doing business, easing tariff and non-tariff barriers to international trade, improving the efficiency of public institutions and improving services such as logistics, telecom, and electricity. The sectorial reforms aim to address market failures and address sectorial regulatory and investments constraints to promote investment in sectors including agriculture and manufacturing, and unleash new growth potentials in sectors such as tourism ICT, mining, and the creative industries.

Successful macro-economic reform requires coordination and synchronization among foreign currency, monetary, fiscal, financial, and capital market reforms. To balance the urgent need for addressing macroeconomic imbalances with the need to minimize potential economic costs of rapid 'shock therapy' type reforms, the home grown macroeconomic reform agenda will be implemented in the course of three years with careful calibration of the pacing, sequencing, and timing of specific reform measures.

The reform agenda will be implemented through a structured and coordinated whole-of government approach. The Ministry of Finance will lead and oversee the implementation of the agenda through the Macro-Economic Committee, which reports to the Prime Minister. Each pillar – macro-financial, structural, and sectorial – will be coordinated through a sub-committee comprised of relevant offices.

Implementing the proposed reform agenda requires mobilization of financial and non-financial resources. Enhancing domestic revenue mobilization, particularly significant improvement in tax collection, coupled with external resource mobilization will be at the core of the reform agenda's financing strategy. The concerted engagement of all segments of society— private sector, academia, and civil society— will be important; thus, broad consultations will be undertaken throughout the reform period to enhance ownership of the agenda by all stakeholders.

At the completion of the reform measures, we envision a stable macro-economy that can sustain a rapid and inclusive economic growth setting the country on a path to prosperity. The reform measures will set the foundation for a robust, resilient, and diversified middle income-level economy through the formation of a dynamic private sector and modern policy and institutional frameworks.

Art & Culture

Artistic value of corridor development

BY WONDWOSSEN ALEMAYEHU HAILE

The corridor development project launched in Addis Ababa is surging through its second phase with the successful accomplishment of its primary phase. The project is one of the grand urban developments chalked out with the prime objective to enhance the standard of the city through upgrading the infrastructure and facilitating connectivity routes between the sub-cities and suburban areas. The project endeavors to foster the city primarily by normalizing the uneven development features within the sub-cities.

The project is in the process of playing a pivotal role in turning around the historical city achieving economic, social and technological advancement. Addis Ababa, which is a seat for the African Union and many other international institutions, is making a spectacular move to cope up with the advancement of the 21st century.

The project is coming up with the glamorous plan of improving the infrastructure which had been uneven and substandard for years. The grand project launched comprises of far-reaching sights of drastically scaling up the standard of the infrastructure for the best technological advancement of the society and its environs.

The massive corridor development project is invigorated to maximize the efficient use of land resources. The land as the prime capital and source of revenue, it is imperative to underscore effective and efficient utilization. The optimization of effective land utilization in the urban areas spearheads the business and social facets placing a monumental impact over the macro and micro economy of the country.

The grand corridor project will have also a significant importance in rising up the architectural value of the city. It plays considerable role in expanding the infrastructure and residential buildings with viable affordability. The ever-increasing construction of buildings in the city will have the tendency to synchronize with each other adding up a remarkable outcome on the overall artistic and economic values of the environment.

The urban development program will have also crucial importance in providing conducive location for myriads of small and large-scale businesses sprouting out in the city as a result of the spacious piece of land capitalized on the operation of the project. The project makes business working areas available for the ever-growing size of population due to several push and pull factors.

The project is also indispensable for providing parking lots which is a



Addis Ababa City Corridor development

By and large, the corridor development project is coming up with substantial advantage to the urban dwellers through becoming a potential for change for brilliant future

pretty crucial challenge in the city. The drastically increasing number of vehicles in the city is putting a considerable size of congestion on the streets pertaining to the limited extent of vacant space in the

city. The under-standard size of roads will have limited capacity to accommodate the huge number of vehicles coming into the streets. Thus, the project has emerged with rendering viable solutions for the infrastructural challenges of the city.

The project will have a remarkable positive influence in increasing artistic values for the high-rise buildings under construction in different sites of the city. It gives the buildings a fabulous panoramic view adding up effective utility and comfort to the residents.

The project will bring convenience to the elderly and children who deserve to enjoy the spacious clean environment. It is part of the development endeavor striving to give more focus for the segments of the society who need more attention. The playing grounds and recreational sites which are designed to be in place by the project will play important role in making the areas suitable and habitable for the society.

The capital-intensive corridor development will have a sustainable vision on human-centred ventures. The project is believed to make the city conducive for life rendering better satisfaction for the residents and international public coming into the country. The human-centered venture will create business experiences beyond the expectations of the society as well. It adopts best experiences and attempts to generating revenue aiming at enhancing the life standard of its people.

The project comprises far-reaching concepts capitalizing on the innovative power by sparking creativity to meet the demands of the society. It caters a convenient avenue for business people to provide their products and services which are tailored in alignment with the demands of the society. It identifies new opportunities for the growth and

renaissance with the best context of the city.

Accessible transportation facilities harbor a substantial power of spurring the economic growth through inviting investors and high-level technologies into the country. The government's relentless effort to provide the society with timely infrastructure will have its role in reinforcing cooperation. As part of the urbanization development, it takes every effort to make education and health facilities more reachable. It will have also of paramount importance in providing clean environment with modern drainage system. It enhances the cleanliness of the environment through up-to-date sewerage system installed.

The project also plays extensive role by providing space for green gardens. They provide a place for people to relax and enjoy nature helping to improve air quality. By creating more green spaces cities can make themselves more sustainable and livable places for everyone. The unused plots made available through the project will give opportunity to create new parks and gardens. As trees are an important part of any green space, they reduce pollution and improve air quality.

The project is playing a considerable part in providing employment opportunities for the larger number of skilled man power in the city. Besides providing various business opportunities, it will have a paramount significance in supplying economic ventures for the larger portions of the middle-income parts of the community.

By and large, the corridor development project is coming up with substantial advantage to the urban dwellers through becoming a potential for change for brilliant future.

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Science & Technology

STEM Education: grooming experts, future innovators (STEM Center trained youths to compete at the World Robotics Olympiad)

BY DARGIE KAHSAY

Last Friday, STEM Power Ethiopia jointly with the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), Ministry of Innovation and Technology (MInT), and other stakeholders organized the Ethiopia National Competition on Robotics. The national robotics competition brings some 37 projects from across the country and targets to select the best robotics developer so as to represent Ethiopia in the World Robotics Olympiad (WRO) to be organized in Turkiye in November.

ADAPTA Multipurpose Robot, developed by a team of Kotebe University of Education STEM Center youths became champion of the national competition. This robot, according to the organizer, will represent Ethiopia for the first time in the WRO in Turkiye. This year's theme of the WRO is "Earth Allies" and the projects displayed at the national competition focus on eco-friendly projects and coming up with new solutions for existing societal problems. More than 100 students, both from elementary and high school classes, from 15 STEM Centers across Ethiopia participated in the competition and presented 37 innovative projects designed to address local and global challenges.

Bereket Assefa is a high school student and member of Kotebe University of Education STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) Center. Bereket is the project coordinator of the winning team during the national robotics competition. Bereket and his friends developed their own designed robot; the ADAPTA Multipurpose Robot following the practical training they received from the center. The robot is a multifunction robot designed to fulfill tasks in the agriculture, manufacturing, health and other sectors.

Approached by *The Ethiopian Herald* Bereket said that the team designed and developed the robot within two months the aim of the project is to manufacture a multifunction robot that can fulfill a lot of tasks in different sectors. Bereket and his team were happy to see the ADAPTA Multipurpose Robot, with its unique features and multipurpose function, win the national competition and be selected to represent Ethiopia at the WRO.

For Bereket, beyond the competition, the knowledge they got from the STEM Center helped him to develop his knowledge in science and innovations. He joined the Kotebe University STEM Center a year ago after being selected from his high school based on the university's request to accept talented students in STEM education. Schools select potentially talented students to join



The winning team from Kotebe University of Education STEM Center at the Ethiopia National Robotics Competition with the organizers at ECA hall here in Addis Ababa

STEM Centers and the centers provide different courses supported by practical education, including labs, according to Bereket. The centers provide training for the youths for one year.

The practical training in hardware and software development he received from the STEM Center helped Bereket to develop his talents in innovation and robotics development.

"For example, the hardware parts include, developing robots and IOT systems while the software part includes programming languages, AI and related practical courses" Bereket stated. In addition to the winner project, team of Kotebe University STEM Center presented two projects during the national competition, a fire extinguisher and nurse-supportive robots. The eco-friendly, multipurpose and energy-efficient ADAPTA Robot won the competition. The robot was developed using used materials, according to Bereket, and due to its multipurpose functions, the robot can fulfill tasks by replacing seven individual robots by adjusting the bundles.

For Bereket sensors are installed in the robot. Using the sensors, it receives computerized instructions to fulfill its tasks. The robot can serve as a nurse during surgery to support the physician; it can serve as a mediator between the nurse and the patient during information gathering about the illness and to identify the symptoms of the patient. Similarly, using the installed adjustments, the multipurpose robot can be used in the manufacturing sector, in agriculture, and other industry sectors.

Mehanayem Teshale with her teammates also presented their own designed robot at the national competition. Mehanayem came from Dilla University STEM Center and with her friends; they developed a road cleaning robot machine, named Autonomous Eco-friendly

Road Cleaner Machine for Sustainable Cities. Mehanayem also learned a lot of practical experiences by joining the STEM Center. Her, before she joined the STEM Center, she had a piece of limited knowledge about hardware and software components.

But now, in addition to developing her knowledge in these components, the practical training helped her to develop her knowledge in science, mathematics, physics, and other science courses in her normal class. Similarly, she developed innovations and creativity as she became friendly with technological activities. The designing, programming, application development, electronics, robotics and related training helped her to develop her talents in science fields.

Based on the training Mehanayem and her friends got from the STEM Center, they designed and developed the Autonomous Eco-friendly Road Cleaner Machine for Sustainable Cities, a project they presented to compete at the national robot competition. They initiated the idea and designed the robot machine so as to manage the road cleaning system in a modern and easy way instead of cleaning public roads with human power.

They used software and hardware components to develop the cleaner robot. They also created their website to promote their project. The robot is an autonomous robot so as to manage itself to fulfill its tasks. Like Bereket's team ADAPTA Multipurpose Robot and Mehanayem's team of Autonomous Eco-friendly Road Cleaner Machine for Sustainable Cities, other 37 eco-friendly and creative robot projects were displayed at the national competition.

Simenew Keskes (PhD), STEMPower Ethiopia Country Director told *The Ethiopian Herald* that the national robot competition was organized after two months of extensive and practical trainings for the youths. The two-month

training was provided in 40 STEM Centers with more than 600 youths across the country. Out of these trained youths, 37 projects were developed by team. Eleven from Addis Ababa and 26 from out of the capital presented their works at the national competition. Based on the set criteria, the national judges selected the winner, who will represent Ethiopia at the WRO.

According to Simenew the robot projects developed by the youths have the potential of solving societal and global problems. STEMPower has 65 STEM Centers across Ethiopia. The centers are providing training on robotics, electronics, computer science, mathematics, physics, and other basic sciences. These centers aim to develop STEM education and cultivate the talents of the youth generation.

As to him, so far due to financial limitations and other challenges, Ethiopia has never participated at the World Robotics Olympiad. Currently, with the financial support from ECA and Google, team Ethiopia will compete at the WRO in Turkiye this year. Only four countries, including Ethiopia will participate at the WRO, according to Simenew.

During the national competition event, Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), Claver Gatete appreciated the young innovators' projects. Gatete said that "We are thrilled to see Ethiopia's young innovators competing at such a high level. This competition not only showcases creativity but also demonstrates Africa's potential to lead in technological solutions to our continent's most pressing challenges."

According to the Executive Secretary, developing digital skills is critical for the development of Africa and for realizing the Agenda 2063 of the continent. Underlined the importance of digital skills development, Gatete stated that "The digital economy in Africa is projected to reach 712 billion Dollars by 2050." But, according to him, only 11% of Africa's tertiary graduates received formal digital training in 2022. Hence, it is high time to invest in digital skills to equip the youth and close the gender gap in technology. "Today is just the first step towards a brighter, inclusive digital future for all," Gatete stated.

By expanding the STEM centers and promoting STEM education beyond the urban centers, it is high time for Ethiopia and Africa as well to cultivate the youth's talents in STEM and other innovations.

The winning team of the center of the Ethiopia National Robotics Competition organized at ECA hall here in Addis Ababa was from Kotebe University of Education STEM.

Society

More awareness on intellectual disabilities

BY TEWODROS KASSA

Most Ethiopians believe that intellectual disability is a curse from God. They wrongly perceived that the children are born with intellectual disabilities and other physical disabilities to reveal God's punishment on the parents for their wrongdoing. This is a totally myth, and the scientific explanation clearly defines it. For instance, Down syndrome is a chromosomal condition which occurs because of an extra copy of a chromosome. It is totally a genetic disorder. A child born with an extra copy of the chromosome will be exposed to genetic disorder. Therefore, his/her different organ systems might be affected. For example, the heart and endocrine system will be affected. In addition to this, they will face concerns with ear, nose, and throat conditions.

Moreover, children born with Down syndrome might have mild to moderate intellectual disability.

In Ethiopia, both in rural and urban areas, parents tend to hide their intellectual disabled children, fearing the society's isolation and bad feelings due to their child. It is obvious that still there are numerous children hiding in homes. Parents hide their child from society until their adult age. Parents chain their child inside a closed door. Most of the parents do not know how to manage and interact with children born with intellectual disabilities. This scenario is another traumatic situation that might lead the intellectual disability child towards a more complicated psychosocial problem.

At the same time, religious fathers also associated such issues with the devil and try to take various measures to free them.

Currently, persons with intellectual disabilities are facing different challenges in Ethiopia due to various reasons. They face difficulties of acquiring quality education, effective healthcare services, among others due to the lack of implementable and inclusive policy framework.

Widespread negative attitudes, stigma and discrimination, and minor sentiments among the public are still the major challenges that obstruct children with intellectual disability not to become more competitive in Ethiopia. If someone has a child with intellectual disability, it is not the child only that will be suffering. The family will undergoes a lot of economic, social, cultural, among others challenges.

Keeping this in mind, it is important

to undertake multi-sectorial advocacy efforts towards creating a better awareness among the public and ease children life born with intellectual disability.

Fikir Ethiopia National Association on Intellectual Disabilities is among the leading associations that have been working in the area through supporting the needy and mobilizing the society to strive for a better future that accommodates persons with intellectual disabilities in the country.

The association was established with children with intellectual disabilities' parents and other volunteer Ethiopians before 30 years in 1994. Currently, the association finalizes preparations to mark its 30th anniversary with various events in the coming weeks. Apart from marking its anniversary, the association plans to promote its noble activities through the participation of more Ethiopians across its journey. Regarding this, expanding the association's branches and embracing more persons with intellectual disabilities sought to be its major objective.

Fikir Ethiopia National Association on Intellectual Disabilities President, Mihret Nigusie told *The Ethiopian Herald* that there are a lot of work still needs to be done regarding persons with intellectual disabilities in Ethiopia.

According to her, the association was founded aimed at curbing the physical and psychosocial trauma of persons with intellectual disabilities and it has been doing its level best through countering all odds.

Accordingly, children born with intellectual disabilities were subjected to various forms of labor, sexual harassment, rape, discrimination and isolation. Following this, in order to solve these problems and to create a safe place for children with intellectual disabilities, the association closely works with the government, pertinent stakeholders, and the general public. To realize this, promoting awareness creation regarding intellectual disabilities is expected to bring about a tangible change.

"Intellectual disability is a lack of intellectual maturity and competence, as well as a lack of competence in social and personal activities. Limitation of mental development occurs when the functions of the mind are not as appropriate or lack of competence and maturity. In terms of personal achievement, there are things that a person is expected to do starting from birth. For example, crying at birth, then sitting up, and then nursing. So, when these things are missing, it can be said that it is a limitation of intellectual



It is important to undertake multi-sectorial advocacy efforts towards creating a better awareness among the public and ease children life born with intellectual disability

development," she said.

"In the last 30 years, the association has been doing a lot of work especially in bringing out children with intellectual disabilities and making them have better life activities. However, it still has many unsolved problems. One of the problems of the association is the lack of clear understanding among the public regarding intellectual disabilities. There are various discriminations and exclusions that happen to the members of the association. The low level of awareness among the community about intellectual disabilities has prevented children with intellectual disabilities from benefiting equally from education, health, work and various social and economic issues."

On the other hand, there are obstacles preventing the association from operating at its full potential. There is a lack of finance and experts so that the members of the association might face challenges to do the things they want to do by travelling far in the rural areas. In these areas, the association was not accessible and could not take out many children with intellectual disabilities

who were locked up at home.

Currently, the association also works on reproductive health and other health-related issues to ensure that children with intellectual disabilities can take care of themselves.

Moreover, providing Early Intervention Care (EIC) and various therapy services; including occupational therapy, behavioral therapy, physiotherapy, speech and language therapy for children with intellectual disability is important to create a better future to them.

What is more, Fiker Ethiopia National Association on Intellectual Disabilities has now expanded its branches out of Addis Ababa in different parts of the country to address the problems that children born with intellectual disabilities are facing.

In sum, the active participation of concerned bodies including the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, higher education institutions as well as other governmental and non-governmental organizations is important to facilitate the necessary preconditions for children born with intellectual disability.



This is Ethiopia



Wonchi Ecotourism project



Halala Kella Lodge

Excelling Ethiopia's tourism via new destinations' dev't

BY TEWODROS KASSA

As one of the oldest civilizations in the world, Ethiopia has a wealth of historical and cultural sites that have long drawn tourists from all corners of the globe. In recent years, the country has been steadily gaining popularity as a must-visit destination for travelers seeking unique cultural experiences, stunning landscapes, and rich history. Apart from this, in order to further enhance Ethiopia's tourism industry and attract more visitors, the development of new destinations is crucial.

Experts in the tourism sector highlighted that one of the key factors in sustaining a thriving tourism industry is the continuous development of new and exciting destinations. As travelers become more adventurous and seek out off-the-beaten-path experiences, it is essential for countries like Ethiopia to showcase lesser-known areas that have the potential to captivate and enchant visitors. By investing in the development of new destinations, Ethiopia can diversify its tourism offerings and attract a wider range of travelers, thereby boosting revenue and promoting economic growth.

Recently, Ambassador Taye Atske-Selassie has been sworn-in as the country's new president. During the 4th-year opening ceremony of the 6th House of People's Representatives and the 4th House of Federation joint session on Monday, President Taye Atske-Selassie said that the tourism sector has shown remarkable progress.

So far, more than one million international tourists visited the country during the past Ethiopian budget year. This enables the country to generate a tangible foreign exchange from the tourism sector and

create job opportunities for numerous youths and women.

According to him, the tourism sector has gained momentum during the past six years following the new destinations development as the government has embarked on development of new tourist destinations in various parts of the country including Addis Ababa through "Dine for Nation" initiative. The initiative enables several new tourist destinations to be developed in different parts of the country.

Accordingly, over the last six year, the government of Ethiopia has developed several tourist destinations with international standards and spearheaded by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed.

Tourism Minister Nasise Chali said that the government has developed new tourism destinations and launched modern tourist services aimed at harnessing the country's immense tourism sector potentials.

Therefore, it is high time to visit Ethiopia and discover the country's age-old and new destinations that embrace ancient civilizations and state-of-the-art touristic services together.

As to her, Ethiopia's recently launched Tourism Satellite Account (TSA) can be utilized as an instrument that measures the generation of tourism economic data (such as the direct contribution of Tourism to GDP) that is comparable with other economic statistics among others.

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed has been named as the new Tourism Champion of IGAD for a three-year term, which will be instrumental in bringing about economic growth among member states and conserving heritages and environmental protection.

Another key aspect of developing new destinations in Ethiopia is to focus on enhancing infrastructure and improving accessibility to these areas. By investing in road networks, transportation systems, and accommodation facilities, Ethiopia can make it easier for travelers to reach and explore new destinations. Improved infrastructure not only benefits tourists but also creates opportunities for local businesses to thrive and grow, thus stimulating economic development in the region.

According to tourism experts, the recent progress observed in the Ethiopian tourism establishments and destinations serve as indicators of excellence and success to those who are interested to engage in the development of the sector in the county.

No doubt, Ethiopia has been experiencing a renaissance in tourism, leveraging its historical wealth to promote its attractions. After years of stagnation, the country is now actively utilizing its tourism assets for economic benefit.

The government recognizes tourism as one of the five key economic sectors and is working to enhance foundational developments that showcase the country's potential in this area.

Travelers are finding well-prepared travel packages and adequate accommodations that provide comfort, while entertainment venues continue to expand both in quantity and quality.

Head of the Real Africa Tour and Travel Service, Usman Mohamed, noted that Ethiopia's unique geographic features, favorable climate, and welcoming hospitality position it well for attracting tourists.

These tourism assets not only enhance the country's image but also serve as a

vital economic foundation.

In light of this, the government has been demonstrating its commitment by carrying out various tourism developments in Addis Ababa and regional states with the objective to maximizing Ethiopia's economic potential, Usman said.

Owner of Discover Ethiopia Tour, Salomon Getu emphasized that the tourism establishments in places like Gorgora, Wenchi, Addis Ababa and other places are creating wealth and job opportunities for the nation.

For those looking to invest in tourism, these facilities are clear quality standards that must be met to ensure the success of their endeavors.

Manager of Yama Ethiopia Tour Operations, Tigist Sisay stated that recent years have seen the emergence of many new tourism attractions, showcasing the sector's growth potential.

As a result, these organizations are responding positively to the increasing demand for tourism, indicating a bright future ahead.

In sum, the development of new destinations is vital for excelling Ethiopia's tourism industry and attracting a diverse range of travelers from around the world. By unveiling hidden gems, engaging local communities, leveraging technology and innovation, and enhancing infrastructure and accessibility, Ethiopia can position itself as a top destination for adventurous travelers seeking unique and authentic experiences. With careful planning and sustainable practices, Ethiopia has the potential to unlock the full richness of its cultural heritage and natural beauty, paving the way for a brighter future for its tourism industry.