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Ethiopia, Russia keen to bolster ties

BY STAFF REPORTER

ADDIS ABABA – Ethiopia and Russia are keen to reinforce bilateral relations, leaders of the two expressed, amid the growing diplomatic interactions since Ethiopia became member of the BRICS bloc a year ago.

On the sideline of the 16th BRICS summit that held between 22 and 24 October, in Russia, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and President

Vladimir Putin have exchanged views about the growing diplomatic relations between the two nations and expressed commitment to further bolster ties.

Appreciating Vladimir Putin for the in-depth conversation, Prime Minister Abiy said after the meeting that the historic bilateral relation of the two countries is strengthening through time.

He also expressed that Ethiopia's admission into the BRICS bloc, in which Russia is

among the founding members, has paved the way to further consolidate the economic cooperation between the two.

Commending Russia for preserving its economic strength amid challenges, the Premier expressed his country's determination to strengthening relations.

President Vladimir Putin said that the relations between the diplomatic missions of the two countries has seen improvement since last year.

See Ethiopia, ... page 3

Ethiopia poised to lead East Africa's digital revolution: report

BY HAILE DEMEKE

ADDIS ABABA-Ethiopia is well-positioned to become a digital leader in East Africa, with the nation's digital economy projected to contribute over 1.3 trillion Birr to GDP by 2028, according to a new GSMA report.

The report, launched jointly by Ethio-telecom and GSMA, highlights Ethiopia's progress in digital transformation. With investments over the past five years, the country has rolled out advanced 4G networks and launched 5G services in Addis Ababa and four regional cities. Ethiopia's Home-Grown Economic Reform (HGER) and strategic investments by Ethio-telecom and Safaricom Ethiopia have significantly expanded mobile network coverage,

See Ethiopia Poised. ... page 3



Ethiopia saddened by terrorist attack on Turkish aerospace industries

Page 7

Ethiopia in BRICS: Advancing multilateralism with global growth leaders

BY HAILE DEMEKE

Ethiopia joined the BRICS alliance a year ago, alongside Egypt, Iran, and the United Arab Emirates, marking a major diplomatic achievement as the country enjoys steady economic growth. The Ethiopian government reaffirmed its commitment to collaborate with international partners, emphasizing that the BRICS+ membership will strengthen relations with rapidly growing economies within the bloc.

The Kazan Summit in 2024 was the first meeting attended by the new BRICS+ members, including Ethiopia. A delegation led by Foreign Affairs State Minister Misganu Arga (Amb.) participated in the 4th Sherpas/Sous-Sherpas meeting held in Kazan, Russia. The 16th BRICS



Summit, which closed with the theme "Strengthening Multilateralism for Just Global Development and Security," underscored the bloc's focus on global reforms.

In a message delivered at the summit, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) highlighted the importance of BRICS, noting that its members represent nearly half of the world's population and over a third of

See Ethiopia in Brics page 3

Mining beyond economic impetus in Ethiopia

Page 6

Wonder beyond mirror

Page 7

Cyber Security Month: Developing cyber security literacy to ensure digital sovereignty

Page 8

unicef
for every child

UNICEF urges all stakeholders to accelerate efforts to see a polio-free Ethiopia

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

ADDIS ABABA - The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) has urged all stakeholders to accelerate efforts to see a polio-free Ethiopia.

In its statement sent to *The Ethiopian Herald* UNICEF stated that Ethiopia is closer than ever to become polio free. Initiatives by the government, development partners and frontline health workers have made significant strides. However, challenges still remain. It is at a high risk of polio cases importation due to recent circulating vaccine-derived polio virus type 2 (cVDPV2) reported in neighboring countries.

With 65 cVDPV2 cases reported from 2019 to 2022 and 14 cVDPV2 cases in 2024, the country is racing against time to vaccinate children faster than the polio virus can spread. Eradicating polio needs immediate action, the statement added.

"To reach polio free status again, there is a need to see rapid and robust responses to polio outbreaks. We need to reinforce routine immunization programme and make them accessible to every child. We also need to invest more in health systems to make them more resilient and integrated."

It urged the government, non-governmental partners, and donors to prioritize vaccination of all children against polio, strengthen immunization systems to ensure all children receive essential, lifesaving vaccines, protect humanitarian and healthcare workers delivering vaccines, provide critical resources to the Global Polio Eradication Initiative and Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, to quickly halt outbreaks and ensure children are vaccinated.

Hence, elevating polio eradication requires political commitment at all levels, prioritizing innovative solutions and coordinated actions to enhance immunization campaign quality.

With life-saving vaccines, commitment and urgent action from governments and partners, it will be possible to see a polio-free Ethiopia, it noted.

PSI stresses expanding education aligned with job market

BY YESUF ENDRIS

ADDIS ABABA – The Ethiopian Policy Studies Institute (PSI), in collaboration with the African Economic Research Consortium, has launched a new research report recommending that the government align human capital development with education and training sectors to enhance national productivity.

At a high-level policy dialogue held yesterday, PSI Director General Fekadu Tsega highlighted the importance of the study, which investigates the investment in education and its impact on the labor market. The findings emphasize the need to align educational efforts with employment opportunities to mitigate education-occupation mismatches.

"The study also explores the economic impact of harnessing human capital development," Fekadu noted. "Its policy recommendations address how improving skilled and semi-skilled labor would positively influence investment, trade balance, and overall economic performance."

PSI which focuses on economic, social, and governance policy research, works with local and international partners to support policy formulation and implementation processes. "Human capital development is crucial as Ethiopia strives to boost productivity and accelerate the structural transformation of its economy," Fekadu added.



Photo: Gebabo Gebre

The African Economic Research Consortium's Research Director Abbiy Kedir stressed the importance of human capital in the context of technological and economic progress. "Technology drives economic development, but without a solid foundation in human capital, sustainable growth is unattainable. Quality education is essential to this process," he remarked.

Abbiy also pointed out that emerging global trends—such as globalization, climate change, and job creation—demand innovative solutions driven by human capital development. "Ethiopia must adopt advanced strategies for job creation to meet the needs of university graduates and non-graduates alike," he emphasized.

With one-third of the global youth

population projected to live in Africa by 2050 and 1.2 billion young people expected to enter the workforce within the next 15 years, Abbiy warned of the urgent need for broad, innovative policies to address unemployment.

During the event, the two institutions signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to collaborate on further research initiatives aimed at supporting Ethiopia's inclusive development agenda.

In Ethiopia, the skills gap between education and employment challenges sustainable development. Studies indicate that integrating practical training, vocational education, and industry partnerships into the curriculum can better prepare youth for the job market, enhancing human capital and economic prosperity.

Revised proclamation to enable women possess land: Federation

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

ADDIS ABABA- The revised proclamation of Rural Land Administration and Use has addressed significant areas that are believed to ensure women's land rights.

Ethiopian Women Federation Director Genet Seyoum made the remark during the policy dialogue held on the Federal and Oromia State's amended Rural Land Administration and Use proclamation.

"While land is the major source of economy particularly for women in rural areas, equal access to land was not ensured due to social norms, weak policy implementation and other reasons. However, unless women's land right is secured, no other rights would be ensured," she emphasized.

Genet, who is also Chair of S4H Steering Committee, said that there need to be firm action from all actors to amend the wrong social perception towards women right to land ownership.

Despite the progressive achievements, much work is needed to ensure political commitment. She further stressed that more emphasis need to be given to sensitizing the community and stakeholders at all level.

Nardos Eshetu, Stand for Her Land (S4HL) Campaign Project Manager, mentioned

that the major aim of the policy dialogue is to close the critical implementation gap between laws and practice so as to benefit women.

Closing the gap requires political commitment. Thus, S4HL campaign, which is launched by Habitat for Humanity Ethiopia, has been delivering capacity building trainings for pertinent stakeholders and advocating for WLRs.

"Not only the former policy failed to address the gaps faced with persistent discriminatory social norms but weak policy implementation has also remained a challenge."

Thus, engaging with communities in realizing women land rights, increasing knowledge for diverse group of stakeholders, and catalyzing sustained, locally driven movement for women land rights is the major objective of the revised policy, she stated.

Moreover, women housing, land and property rights contribute to their leadership and participation in decision making. Furthermore, it is instrumental in improving food security, poverty reduction, and sustainable economic growth, she added.

Presenting a paper on the amended proclamation, Melese Damitte (PhD), said

that land is a life line of economy for many countries like Ethiopia where people depend their lives on farming and pastoralist.

Unlike the former policy, he said, the revised proclamation included significant areas with the intention of ensuring women's land rights. The new rural Land Administration and Use Proclamation 1324/2024 has included 13 entities of word women while the former failed to give due emphasis.

He also noted that the new proclamation included different Articles that aimed to address barriers which are believed to limit the opportunity for women to exercise their land rights.

One such example could be the article that gives priority to women during land distribution among spouses, particularly for landless women. Similarly, it included access to land whether married, widowed or separated, while it gives right to joint development with investors (capital contribution), and equal right with men in using, administering and transferring land while in marriage, among others.

S4HL operates through country coalition, consisting of robust network of 23 local CSOs which are believed to drive the movement to the grass root level and advocate for women's land rights, it was learned.

News

Japan strengthens ties with Ethiopia via school expansion projects

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

ADDIS ABABA-The Japanese government has reaffirmed its support for education in Ethiopia by funding the expansion of schools in Sidama State, the Embassy of Japan in Ethiopia announced.

Two school expansion projects were inaugurated last week in Sidama, both made possible through Japan's continued assistance. During the ceremony, Japanese Ambassador Shibata Hironori emphasized the importance of the initiative, stating that the new facilities will provide a supportive and conducive learning environment for children in Sidama and nearby areas.

"This project will serve as a symbol of the goodwill of the Japanese people and further deepen the friendship between the people of Japan and Ethiopia," Shibata remarked.

The inaugurated projects include the expansion of Belela Secondary School in Bilate Zuria District and Arbegona Yayye Senior Secondary School in Yayye Town, Arbegona District. The total grant of 186,000 USD was provided through Japan's Grant Assistance for Grassroots and Human



Security Projects (GGP) program.

The ceremony was attended by Ambassador Shibata, along with Beyene Berasa, Vice President and Head of the Education Office of Sidama State, and Biniam Belachew, Executive Director of Resurrection and Life Development Organization.

According to the embassy, the GGP initiative enabled the construction of four furnished classrooms and four latrine rooms at Belela Secondary School, improving the learning environment for 3,000 students. Additional latrine facilities, with four rooms, were built with support from Family Mart and Itochu.

Similarly, the expansion at Arbegona Yayye

Senior Secondary School included the construction of four furnished classrooms and six latrine rooms, enhancing the school's capacity to accommodate both current and future students.

Representing the embassy, Hori Kaori highlighted the long-term impact of the projects. "This initiative will ensure a better learning environment for over 3,000 students and many more children to come," she stated.

The GGP program, introduced in 1989, has funded over 400 projects in Ethiopia, supporting sectors such as education, healthcare, women's empowerment, and basic human needs.

Ethiopia saddened by terrorist attack on Turkish aerospace industries

BY STAFF REPORTER

ADDIS ABABA-Ethiopia is saddened by the heinous terrorist attack against the Turkish Aerospace Industries in Ankara that has claimed loss of human lives.

The country extends condolences to the families of the victims, to the brotherly people of Türkiye and the friendly Government of Türkiye.

Ethiopia strongly condemns the terrorist attack and stands with Türkiye in its fight against terrorism, according to the press statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA).

Ethiopia in BRICS...

global GDP. Abiy emphasized that BRICS is well-positioned to drive sustainable global development and promote economic growth.

"To unlock this potential, global governance structures must become more inclusive and responsive to the needs of developing and emerging economies," Abiy stated. He criticized the current international financial system, calling for comprehensive reform to create a more equitable framework. He also urged BRICS to lead by example, fostering mutually beneficial cooperation that supports not only its members but also the development goals of other emerging economies.

Abiy pointed to Ethiopia's fast-growing economy as a valuable opportunity for BRICS nations to invest and collaborate in areas like trade and agriculture. Ethiopia's vast natural resources and strategic access to African markets position it as a key partner in the bloc's economic strategy, he added.

Echoing the Prime Minister's message, National Bank of Ethiopia Governor Mamo Mihretu stressed the need for an effective multilateral system. "The current system doesn't reflect today's reality. For instance, no African country holds a permanent seat on the UN Security Council, which has real-world consequences," he noted. Mamo also criticized the IMF's voting structure,

pointing out that small Western nations have more influence than large developing countries like China and India, distorting financial governance.

"We need better representation in global financial institutions," Mamo stressed, adding that Ethiopia's IMF quota is inadequate and does not reflect its economic progress. He called for reforms that would enhance access to international financing for developing nations.

Chinese President Xi Jinping expressed China's commitment to working with BRICS countries to advance high-quality cooperation and promote unity among Global South nations. Xi emphasized the goal of building a shared future for mankind through collective progress.

Political-economic analyst Lawrence Freeman highlighted the bloc's efforts to develop an independent BRICS payment system to reduce reliance on Western financial networks. BRICS Pay, currently under development, aims to function as a decentralized payment messaging system, providing an alternative to SWIFT.

With Ethiopia's growing involvement in BRICS, the country is poised to play a key role in global economic reform while reaping the benefits of new trade and investment opportunities.

Ethiopia...

The trade exchange between Ethiopia and Russia is increasing through time, Putin said, adding that his country is committed to bolster partnerships with Ethiopia in pharmaceutical and other industries.

According to the President, the Chairperson of the Council of the Russian Federation

would head to Ethiopia as part of his country's plan to improve ties with Ethiopia and other African countries.

Putin also expressed that his country would conduct the first ministerial conference with African countries this year.



Ethiopia poised...

driving rapid digital growth.

Speaking at the event yesterday, Ethio-telecom CEO Frehiwot Tamiru emphasized the crucial role of the telecommunications sector in accelerating the country's economic growth through digitalization. "Telecom investments are catalyzing growth across sectors such as agriculture, manufacturing, and public services, contributing to Ethiopia's steady economic rise," she noted.

The report projects that these advancements will create over one million new jobs and generate 57 billion Birr in tax revenues by 2028. As of 2023, the telecom sector has already contributed 700 billion Birr to GDP and generated 57 billion Birr in taxes. Mobile internet connections have surged by 65%, with 4G coverage expanding eightfold, thanks to increased competition and investments from Ethio-telecom and Safaricom Ethiopia.

GSMA's Senior Director of Public Policy for Sub-Saharan Africa Caroline Mbugua noted that Ethiopia achieved an impressive 10% average GDP growth over the decade to 2019, and 50 million Ethiopians are expected to be connected to mobile internet by 2028-nearly double the current number. Increased connectivity will drive

growth across sectors, adding 140 billion Birr to agriculture and 114 billion Birr to manufacturing.

With 90 million registered mobile money accounts and a 70% penetration rate, mobile financial services are becoming a key driver of financial inclusion. As these services expand, they will play an increasingly important role in boosting both digital and economic inclusion.

The GSMA outlined several policy recommendations to maximize Ethiopia's digital potential, including reducing sector-specific taxes to make mobile services more affordable.

GSMA's Sub-Saharan Africa Head Angela Wamola praised Ethiopia's progress: "Ethiopia is well-positioned to be a digital leader in East Africa. With strategic reforms and improved access to digital tools and services, the country can unlock unprecedented economic and social opportunities, benefiting millions of people."

This report underscores that Ethiopia's digital transformation is not only an economic opportunity but also a critical path toward greater social inclusion and sustainable development.

Opinion

Refurbishing military cooperation for continental stability

BY MENGESHA AMARE

Without a shadow of doubt, any nation should have military organization as the latter is the ultimate shield of that specific country. Yes, the military may be employed in additional sanctioned and non-sanctioned functions within the state, including internal security threats, crowd control, and promotion of political agendas, emergency services and reconstruction, protecting corporate economic interests, social ceremonies, and national honor beyond warfare.

The cooperation of such a prestigious institution and its members need to move in unison with those of other countries to come up with stable and respected nations. That is why countries of the African continent recently commenced a military cooperation.

True, military cooperation is an essential component of military diplomacy and helps build close ties with other nations. Such cooperation also helps strengthen strategic security relationships and address common security concerns. It is hard to maintain positive feelings via developing teamwork and shared decision making, openness, trust and safety, well being among others to have confident military muscle and unwavering sovereignty.

Yes, military cooperation is a military joint function that integrates the understanding of various factors of the operating environment and that enables, facilitates, and conducts military interaction to support the accomplishment of missions and military strategic objectives in peacetime, and crisis too. The obvious motivation in states engaging in military alliances is to protect themselves against threats from other countries. However, states have also entered into alliances to improve ties with a particular nation or to manage conflict with a particular nation.

In response to the volatile global order and contemporary security challenges facing the continent, African Defense Ministers and Military Attachés convened a critical conference aimed at addressing Africa's complex security landscape. During the gathering in Addis Ababa recently, the delegates explored Africa's military evolution and future strategies, emphasizing the need for continental cooperation to counter emerging security threats in the global arena.

While officially opening the conference, Deputy Prime Minister Temesgen Tiruneh remarked that renewing continental commitments and engaging military expertise are keys to ensure peaceful, prosperous and resilient Africa.

Ethiopian Defense Minister Ayisha Mohammed (Eng.) stressed the importance of strengthening knowledge and collaboration to tackle the growing threats of cyber-attacks, organized crime, and human trafficking. She highlighted that building resilience among African nations requires unified efforts.

The International military cooperation is also a complex of measures in the military, military education, military-political and military-technical areas carried out by the Ministry of Defenses with the military institutions of foreign states and international organizations in bilateral, trilateral and multilateral formats.

International cooperation encompasses all

professional activities aimed at supporting people in need and promoting economic, social and cultural development around the globe. Continental/international cooperation covers the fields of humanitarian aid, development cooperation and peace promotion.

It is definitely high time for renewing military cooperation for Africa's future. Obviously, renewing continental commitments and engaging military expertise are keys to ensure peaceful, prosperous and resilient Africa. Unequivocally, Africa does not exist in isolation, so it is highly critical to deepen regional and continental engagements to smash the existing bounded threats out and ensure the common security and economic issues.

The aforesaid conference pinpointed that Africa has to unite in peace, needs to be strong in security, and focused on strengthening continental security issues and military cooperation across the continent. African defense ministers, military attaches, senior military officers, higher government officials and researchers on the Africa's future collective military strategies were in attendance.

Not only is the conference a milestone towards addressing peace and security but also to expedite Africa's progress and future progress. Apart from the training facilities, and promoting partnerships to ensure peace and security, Ethiopia is undertaking exemplary military professionalism, and infrastructural maintenance.

The very important thing that needs to be taken into account is that cooperation strengthens capacity building within defense sectors through training, technology transfer, and the exchange of knowledge. Such a bold move also helps further strengthen the bilateral agreements in the area between/among nations.

Hand in hand consolidating cooperation, the continent has to work on reinvigorating spirit of pan-Africanism taking Ethiopia as its hub as the nation has been playing a historical role in peacekeeping and regional stabilities. Besides, the nation is one of the top peace keeping troops contributing countries in Africa.

Of course, military diplomacy has long been one of the essential constituents of international diplomacy and an effective methodology, to foster bilateral and regional relationships. Military training cooperation is also an essential component of military diplomacy and helps build close ties with other nations as it enables countries to establish firm rapport each other/one another.

Such a firm cooperation also helps strengthen strategic security relationships and address common security concerns. Ethiopian defense has rich expertise of operating in varied terrain, as also live combat experience in a vast spectrum of operations. This potential can therefore, be utilized to partake in training activities with other countries, to build close military ties and healthy, mutually beneficial bilateral relations.

Diplomacy can be called the art or practice of conducting international relations, indeed! One of the roles of military diplomacy manifests itself in preventive diplomacy, and within this framework, the military component is aimed to achieve the climate of confidence, necessary for the improvement of relations between two

nations. This can be called peacetime military diplomacy.

The best approach to the prevention of confrontation between/among countries is to identify of common interests and to widen cooperation between them in diverse fields, particularly 'military'. Depending upon the nature of relations between the states, the interests, peacetime military diplomacy has to find the best rhythm for the development of military relations.

Such a remunerative diplomacy is an important constituent of the five basic channels of nation-to-nation contact between friendly governments, i.e., political, diplomatic, economic, cultural/social, and last but not the least, military. As a component of foreign policy, it aims to bring in greater transparency and confidence in the military sphere and contribute towards closer relations with countries through constructive use of defense resources in times of peace.

This entails striking the right balance between foreign policy and security interests and strengthening military relations through foreign policy tools like military training programs, arms transfers, security dialogues and confidence-building measures. These efforts pay off, with stronger security relationships with other countries.

Ethiopia has an abiding stake in peace and stability in its neighborhood for its long-term security and projection on the regional and eventually the world scene. One of the objectives of a country's foreign policy is the intensification and consolidation of ties with the neighbors and strengthening of peace and security in the region as a whole, through mutually beneficial cooperation.

Defense cooperation can also help build the foundation for regional group action, which is based on mutual trust and confidence. Upgrading military ties, by looking at various alternatives of peacetime military diplomacy in a sustained manner, can reduce the security concerns in the region and assist in the fulfillment of the foreign policy objectives. Furthermore, the defense training operation is an essential component of military prudence and can prove vital in furthering Ethiopia's strategic interests.

The establishment of defense cooperation as a defense mission by African countries has provided better coherence and renewed impetus to peacetime activities by its armed forces. In keeping with foreign policy and security objectives, African countries have to establish, build and maintain military-to-military contacts with other countries so as to contribute to strengthening of relations and enhancing peace and security.

The advent of defense cooperation helps nations shape the international security environment in support of key their national security objectives, to improve political and military relations with one another and each other, enhance military modernization and to acquire knowledge in modern military doctrine, operations, training, military medicine, administration, and a host of non-combat-related areas.

All the countries of the continent shall have the vast expertise can therefore be utilized to impart meaningful training to the defense forces of countries in the regions of interest,

and to conduct joint training, to build up close military ties and healthy, mutually beneficial bilateral relations. Military training cooperation can therefore be made a focal point of Africa's military pattern.

Protecting sensitive technologies and information will be of prime importance during joint training and exercises. It will also be imperative to ensure safety of own troops provided as part of training teams with other countries.

The cooperation will also help establish long lasting ties, with future military leaders of the countries in the areas of interest. It is for this reason that Ethiopia and other African nations send officers to attend courses in various countries.

Military training is Ethiopia's forte and it is essential to take advantage of this strength to harness the goodwill of the younger military generation of other countries in the regions of interest and to establish strategic relationship with them. Many African countries need to utilize the expertise gained in UN peacekeeping operations by imparting training to other countries in various facets of peacekeeping.

Combined exercises between defense forces facilitate interoperability and conduct of joint military operations against a common threat. They provide insight into each other's leadership techniques, battle drills and standard operating procedures. By training together and cooperating, confusion and delays are prevented and joint operations made smooth and effective. Confidence levels, professional trust and respect are built up through joint exercises. Moreover, such exercises convey signals to potential adversaries and challengers of authority, about the joint military response their actions could invite.

In sum, it is important to lay equal stress on bilateral and multilateral exercises with the defense of the continent. The bilateral and multilateral military and security cooperation can be viewed as a desirable strategic necessity, in terms of Ethiopia and other countries' long-range national security requirements and interests.

All African countries have embarked on joint exercises for humanitarian airlift, special operations training and small unit group exercises among themselves. Yes, defense cooperation has played a significant role in building strong ties by Ethiopia with the countries in the neighborhood and extended neighborhood.

The participation by the defense forces in training activities with other nations has a number of direct payoffs. Professional knowledge and skills are updated and it provides a benchmark to ascertain training standards, with respect to other countries. It also gives an insight into the available technology in a particular field, for modernization of the defense forces. Unambiguously indeed, it is important to develop close ties with the military forces of the region, to build confidence and enhance security. There cannot be a foreign policy without military content.

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

Editorial

The world needs to act fast to make global system fair

Over the years, the world has seen competing interests and rival camps emerging with intensity as part of countering the existing international system which many see as unfair and few serving. The system, albeit revered and reviled by many, has come under increasing scrutiny. Particularly, the global south, which is home to a significant slice of the world's population and body mass, has become increasingly resentful and boldly challenged the status quo. It also became clear that the existing international system falls short of redressing emerging global predicaments.

From the UN Security Council to the IMF, international institutions and organizations have been caught in the midst of intense debates about reforms. Undeniably, the architects have heeded the call for reforming the UN and international system, even though no meaningful actions have been taken.

The issue of equal representation and inclusivity has been the key aspects of reforming the international system. The international system has appeared to be ineffective in overcoming new and emerging threats facing the globe. The system itself for many is also an extension of past justice and is serving as a tool of the few strong. However, the rapid economic growth in the south and the burgeoning population has reform the global system must since the international community cannot handle global matters with the equal and active participation of all.

The failure to put in place has led to the birth of alliances like BRICS and other entities. The imbalance in the global system is pushing nations both developed and developing ones to look for alternative institutions and options. BRICS over the years have expanded adding new members like Ethiopia. Interestingly, Ethiopia has been a frontrunner in pushing for equal representation in the international system. The country also continues to be critical of the existing system calling for Africa's equal representation in the UN Security Council and other organizations. Its firm position has been displayed in various world stages.

That is at least what has been observed in The 16th BRICS Summit that is taking place in Kazan, Russia where dozens of leaders have gathered for a three-day of intense diplomatic discussions and high-level bilateral talks as part of the international forum which offers a new vision of multilateralism.

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed during the occasion underscored that his country is prepared to engage constructively in fostering multilateralism as the newest member of the BRICS family.

"As the newest member of the BRICS family, Ethiopia is prepared to engage constructively in fostering multilateralism that serves both developed and developing nations, anchored in the principle of equity," he said.

According to the Prime Minister, the world is rapidly evolving with a multitude of crises that demand wisdom and a thoughtful approach. "The imbalances in our global economic framework are driving rising inequality, inflation and unemployment, making collective efforts more urgent than ever," he elaborated.

Believing BRICS is uniquely positioned to galvanize support for a fair and representative multilateralism, he revealed that together, we can champion reforms that address the concerns of developing nations and ensure that their voices are heard on the global stage.

"Ethiopia, in particular, wishes to emphasize that the reform of the UN Security Council deserves our attention. We have confidence that the countries at this summit will prioritize Africa's representation in the UN Security Council, adhering to the common African position. This is not just about representation. It is about justice, equity and ensuring that all nations can contribute to global governance," Abiy emphasized.

In short, the bottom line agenda has reached a point of no return and requires an urgent response and swift reform.



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The Ethiopian Herald

Opinion

The ENDF: A pillar of peace, rule of law, sovereignty and pan Africanism

BY SOLOMON DIBABA

The ENDF is one of the strongest and highly disciplined armies in Africa with a history which dates back to the ancient days of the formation of the statehood of the country. It is a multi-ethnic power house of Ethiopian unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity. It is a pan Africanist force which supported the liberation of African countries from the shekels of colonialism and promoter of national, regional and global peace keeping missions across the world.

Ethiopia has made substantial contributions to global peacekeeping, particularly through the deployment of troops in United Nations (UN) and African Union (AU) missions.

Ethiopia is among the top troop-contributing countries to UN peacekeeping missions. Ethiopian soldiers have been involved in numerous missions across Africa, helping to stabilize conflict zones and support post-conflict recovery. Their contributions to these missions are critical in maintaining peace and security in war-torn regions.

Ethiopian peacekeepers units from ENDF have participated in African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM and ATMIS), playing a crucial role in fighting extremist groups like Al-Shabaab and contributing to the stabilization of Somalia. Ethiopia's military presence in Somalia is part of broader regional efforts to fight terrorism and insurgency.

ENDF contingents under UNMISS in South Sudan, where they work to protect civilians, facilitate humanitarian assistance, and support the peace process. Additionally, Ethiopia has been instrumental in UNISFA in the disputed Abyei region between Sudan and South Sudan, where Ethiopian troops have been the primary peacekeeping force.

Ethiopia's peacekeeping efforts through the ENDF are not limited to military support. The country has also been a leader in political and diplomatic peace initiatives, including mediating peace talks in conflict zones like South Sudan and the Sudan-Ethiopia border regions.

Since the 1950s, Ethiopian troops have participated in peacekeeping missions. For example, during the Korean War, Ethiopia sent troops as part of the UN's efforts, marking one of its first international military involvements. This tradition has continued through their involvement in various UN missions across the world.

Ethiopia's contributions to global peacekeeping have earned the country recognition for its commitment to maintaining international peace and security, particularly in Africa.

What therefore are the fundamental internal indicators that show the unique features of modern Ethiopian defense forces who paid in blood and flesh of her sons and daughters not only for the defense of the country against local intruders but also international irredentist forces?

The modern Ethiopian army is a reformed apolitical defense force that is engaged in not only defending the unity, territorial integrity and sovereignty of the country but also an active partner in Ethiopia's multiple sets of

development programs and one of the nodal points of national technological innovations.

The Ethiopian army is undergoing a reform process comprising six programs, which its strategists hope will achieve 11 goals. In the eyes of the architects of the defense reforms, the objectives are to strengthen civilian oversight, enhance social control, make it transparent and accountable, as well as modernize it to become professional, modern and competent enough to respond to predictable and unpredictable threats.

Ethiopia possesses well-structured, disciplined and integrated army comprising of the ground, air and naval forces that is actively participating in building the capacity of the defense forces of the neighboring countries like Somalia and South Sudan. Ethiopia helped to reestablish the current federal government of Somalia by providing military and civil related trainings in the spirit of pan Africanism and its foreign policy of prioritizing relations with the neighboring countries as well as in peace.

The strength of the ENDF lies both in its social base and ethnic mix and its commitment in pioneering the struggle against international terrorism, arms trafficking in cooperation with national security forces and international partners who are fighting against global terrorism.

The ENDF is rendering significant contributions to the development and promotion of TVET and higher education of learning through the Defense University, War College in which highly qualified officers and commanders are graduating every year to serve in the ENDF,

Besides, ENDF is contributing to the universal health service development of the country through its quality services through modern referral hospitals, field hospitals and health centers constructed by the engineering sector of the army which are proving quality services to the armed forces, their families and community members.

One of the most important contributions of the ENDF is in the areas of transfer of technology in developing and modifying modern armaments including armored vehicles, fighter jets and other arsenals used by the army. The engineering section of the ENDF has been providing technical support to the construction of GERD which is now on its final stage of completion.

By way of promoting food security and self-sufficiency in food items, various ENDF commands and divisions are engaged in agricultural development programs in their areas of operations.

In terms of social services, the ENDF Construction units and ENDF Foundation are contributing to the development of logistics services, housing construction programs and other integrated and comprehensive services that clearly indicate that the ENDF is indeed the people's army.

It is now obvious that the Ethiopian Navy is steadily but surly joining the defense forces of the country with the objective of contributing its part in ascertaining the safety of ship and security of the Red Sea trade route from the encroachments of sea piracy and illicit arms trafficking in the Horn of Africa.

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

Business & Economy

Mining beyond economic impetus in Ethiopia

BY MENGESHA AMARE

It is well recognized that mining is the process of extracting valuable minerals or other geological materials from the earth. These materials are used for a plethora of purposes, including the production of energy, constructing buildings, manufacturing various goods, among others.

The mining industry is critical to modern society because it provides raw materials for peoples' daily life. Mining underpins practically every area of modern life, from the construction of buildings and infrastructure to the creation of electronics and renewable energy technology.

The Ministry of Mines announced that the macroeconomic reforms being implemented are increasing gold production significantly. It was also pointed out that work is being done to increase productivity by modernizing traditional mining and reducing production loss.

State Minister of Mines, Million Mathewos told the Ethiopian Press Agency that the macroeconomic reforms being implemented by the government are significantly increasing the productivity of minerals, especially gold production.

The mineral production which was produced on a small scale is increasing to a large extent. In particular, gold productivity is growing at a high level. It is planned to produce 8.6 tons of gold in the current fiscal year.

He pointed out that 70% of the plan was achieved in the last three months alone. The reform is benefiting the mineral producers, who have purchased better machinery and technologies and are entering the production process.

Having this understanding in mind, *The Ethiopian Herald* had a stay with Gedion Petros, a geologist graduated from Addis Ababa University, to have some sorts of information about the significance of mining for backing the economic growth of a given nation, centering Ethiopia of course.

He said, "Mining industry is in constant development on earth as a result of increasing demand for raw materials. The acquisition of mineral raw materials is the most important part of the mining industry, which produces raw materials worth hundreds of millions of wealth a year. It promotes employment and increases the value of the gross domestic product. The influence of mining activity on the development of socio-economic aspects is vital though minimal in the country due to various factors.

The Ministry of Mines, in the country, is responsible for the development of the mining sector. The role of the Ministry is mainly to generate the basic geo-sciences data of the country, promote mineral and petroleum potential, negotiate and issue licenses to private investors, and ensure that they conduct mineral and petroleum operations in accordance with their concession agreements, he said.

According to Gedion, the Ministry of Mines is responsible for management of mining and petroleum sector in Ethiopia. It was established in 2018 under Proclamation No 1097/2018. Mined materials are needed



Some precious minerals in Ethiopia

to construct roads and hospitals, build automobiles and houses, make computers and satellites as well as generate electricity.

He said, "The mining sector does have a huge impact on economy as it helps the nation create job and foster employment opportunities, prop economic growth and development, augment foreign exchange earnings and balance of Trade, promote technological advancements and innovation thereby spurring contribution to nation revenues and public services."

As to him, the main methods of mining have to be well exploited. To mention but a few, underground mines are more expensive and are often used to reach deeper deposits, surface mines are typically used for more shallow and less valuable deposits, placer mining is used to sift out valuable metals from sediments in river channels, beach sands, or other environments.

He said, "Unless duly taken care of and managed well, environmental impacts of mining like climate change, habitat destruction or deforestation, pollution, soil erosion, human-wildlife conflict, and the loss of biodiversity would be rampant."

Yes, he added that good mining activities can increase national income, reduce pollution, decrease land slope, improve topsoil thickness, reduce soil erosion etc. As to him, Mining is already a high-tech and sustainable industry, and many countries need mining to not only thrive, but also to survive. The mining industry supports citizens' everyday life, indeed! Aside from supporting thousands of jobs, the mining industry provides raw materials, minerals and metals critical to the national economic drive.

According to Gedion, life-saving medical devices would not exist without many of the metals and minerals that are mined. There are even medicines that doctors and patients rely on every day that would not be available without the presence of minerals. Mining has been a fundamental part of human civilization since the dawn of time, providing the raw materials necessary for advancements in technology, infrastructure, and industry.

Miners extract valuable minerals and metals from the earth, which are essential for manufacturing a wide array of products. For instance, iron ore is a primary component of steel, used extensively in construction and



manufacturing. Copper is vital for electrical wiring due to its high conductivity. Rare earth elements are crucial for producing high-tech gadgets like smart phones, computers, and renewable energy technologies such as wind turbines and electric vehicles. Without mining, the availability of these essential materials would be severely limited, stifling technological and industrial progress.

The mining industry is a major economic driver significantly contributing to the GDP of many countries. It provides jobs to millions of people worldwide, from mining engineers to laborers, thereby supporting entire communities.

"In developing nations like ours, mining can be a catalyst for economic growth, attracting investments, and providing the means for infrastructure development is given due emphasis. Additionally, mining companies often invest in local communities, supporting schools, hospitals, and other essential services," he opined.

Modern infrastructure relies heavily on materials obtained through mining. Roads, bridges, railways, and airports all require vast amounts of metal and stone. Concrete, a fundamental building material, is made using limestone, which is also extracted through mining.

As to Gedion, even the green energy sector relies on mining; solar panels, wind turbines, and electric car batteries require specific minerals and metals to function efficiently. Thus, mining underpins the development and maintenance of the infrastructure that supports modern society with a swelled economic muscle.

He said, "Universities, which are working on minerals and offering courses along this line like for instance, Addis Ababa University, Addis Ababa Science and Technology University, not limited to of course, need to employ state-of-the-art facilities, expert faculty, and strong industry partnerships, providing students with hands-on experience and a robust professional network. Notably, the commitment of these universities would enable the nation to sustainability ensure that graduates are well-prepared to contribute to the future of green energy and responsible resource management."

According to Gedion, technological innovation depends on materials sourced from mining. Silicon, used in

semiconductors, is derived from quartz. Lithium, essential for rechargeable batteries, is mined from various mineral deposits. As technology evolves, new materials are continually being discovered and utilized, often requiring specific elements that need to be mined. For instance, the transition to a low-carbon economy, with its focus on renewable energy sources and electric vehicles, depends heavily on mined materials.

Mining provides the foundational materials for industries thereby buttressing the production and distribution of goods. A disruption in the mining sector can lead to significant economic consequences, highlighting its importance in maintaining the flow of goods and services. Many forms of energy production are tied to mining. Coal, though declining in use due to environmental concerns, has been a major source of energy for centuries. Uranium, used in nuclear power, is another mined resource. Even renewable energy sources like wind and solar power rely on mined materials for their infrastructure. This demonstrates that mining is intricately linked to both traditional and modern energy solutions.

Mining is crucial for sustainability and the future of green energy as it provides essential materials for renewable energy technologies and sustainable infrastructure. Minerals like lithium, cobalt, and rare earth elements are vital for producing batteries, wind turbines, and solar panels, which are key components of a low-carbon economy. Additionally, sustainable mining practices, such as using renewable energy, reducing waste and recycling materials, support environmental preservation. By supplying the necessary resources for green technology and adopting eco-friendly practices, mining plays a pivotal role in advancing sustainability and combating climate change.

Mining is indispensable to the modern world though our country is lagging behind in terms of exploiting its mineral resources as it deserves. The mining industry provides the raw materials necessary for technological innovation, economic growth, infrastructure development, and energy production.

As Ethiopia continues to advance and strive for sustainability, the mining industry must also evolve, adopting more environmental friendly practices to ensure that the nation can meet the needs of today without compromising the ability of future generation to meet their own. The importance of mining, therefore, extends beyond mere economic value; it is a cornerstone of modern civilization and a key to future progress.

In a nutshell, the country's universities especially those which are working on the area of mining and mining-related fields are expected to come to the forefront of innovation and sustainability in the field, offering comprehensive education and cutting-edge research opportunities. With a strong emphasis on sustainable practices, the plans, skills, knowledge, and methods with which students and other trainees are provided have to be pumped into the means to address the environmental and economic challenges facing the mining industry in this contemporary world.

Art & Culture

Wonder beyond mirror

BY KALKIDAN NEGASH

Understand that insecurities are a natural part of life that everyone experiences. After I graduated from Haramaya university when I got back to my home city Addis Ababa, out of nowhere, my face started changing with a lot of dark spots. Everybody around me kept asking me “what’s wrong with your face?” which made me feel terrible and took away all of my confidences. I sought help from several dermatologists, but it did not help. I bought a lot of expensive skin care products, but it was only for temporary solution. This left me feeling depressed. I became full of anxiety believing that I had ruined my life. I found it difficult to talk to anyone about it and had to cancel many of my plans due to my insecurities. It may seem straightforward, but it was not, particularly for a young lady who appreciates leisure and leads a modest lifestyle. I was thinking about my pals’ perfect glass skin when we first met.

When I saw the movie called “Wonder” at that time all my belief started to change. I relate with this movie. Probably I feel and understand this more than anyone around. I can say that the film proved my life saver, and also if you want stunning acting go and watch the movie. Julia Robert and Owen Wilson wonderfully played the characters.

Wonder movie is adopted from Wonder book by J.C palacio novel, the movie pilot is about years old with craniofacial condition, a genetic disorder that affect chick bones. Even he had a lot of surgeries he cannot skip from facial difference, and he had 27 surgeries in ten years. He had also a passion of astronomy; his bedroom is full of artistic space science arts.

His mother Isabel had taught him at home till he was in grade 5. When his parents decided to go to a new school called Beecher to better connect the kids and environment, Auggie wasn't happy about it and became furious because of his face.

After a long talk Auggie was convinced to go to new school but he was afraid about his face. In his first day of school he did not find a school friend, but it took a lot of bullying. When he got home he wasn't happy about school. And he left the table with anger; his mom followed him to his new bedroom and said “you can't leave a table like this”.

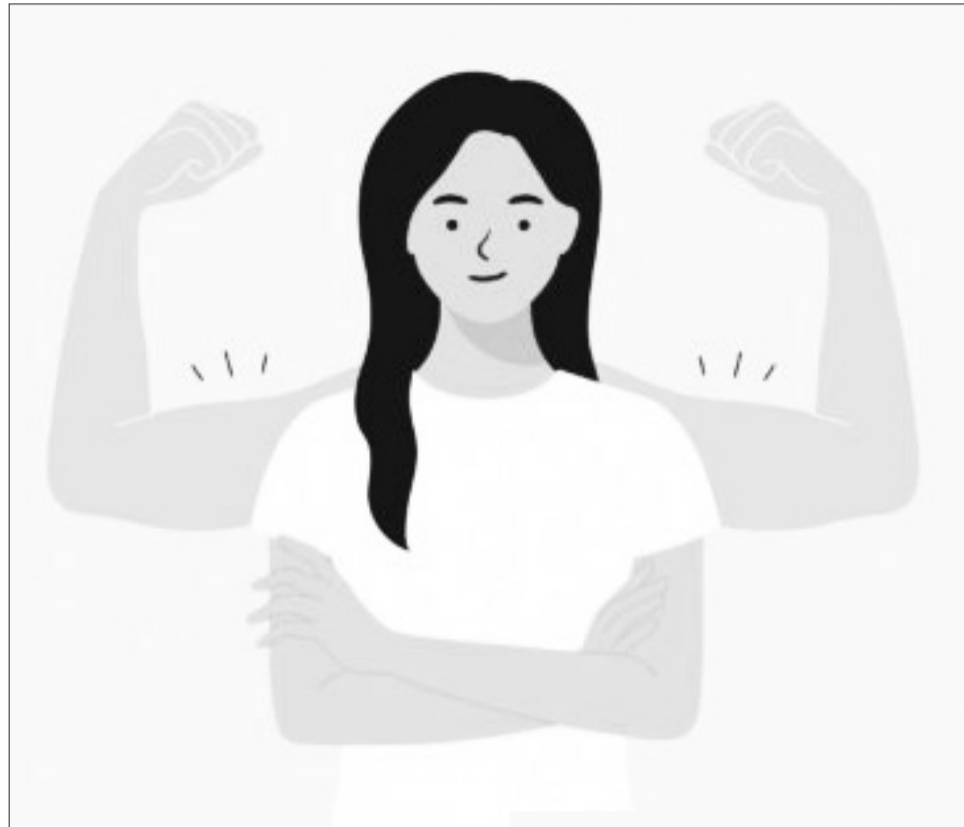
He started to cry and asked her “Why do I have to be ugly?”

Wait, what would you answer if your son poses to you the same question?

“You are not ugly Auggie.”

“You are just saying this because you are my mom.”

Because I am your mom doesn't count!



“Yeah”

“Because I am mom it counts the most because I know you the most, you are not ugly and anyone who cares to know, will see that.”

The next days of school Auggie can see the school well, gradually he can communicate with class mates, especially one of his first friends Jack then he can get his happiness back. Finding the little joys of every time is good but you aren't supposed to be happy every time, you have to have peaks and valleys to appreciate the happy moments more. Yeah, that was a thing Auggie experience at that time.

Another thing you can see in these movies is the power of family. Auggie has amazing family who is there no matter what. And also Auggie's older sister, like her parent says, she is the most understanding girl, who helped her brother a lot. She was really outstanding, and her mother knows it, because all her parent's attention diverts to Auggie and his medical needs, she doesn't even ask attention from her family.

The incident occurred when Auggie went to celebrate Halloween Day. He overheard his closest buddy talking badly about himself, which made him feel horrible about himself. He also questioned why he looked this way. After a long period of being distracted, Auggie decided not to talk to his best friend.

When Via finds Auggie crying in his room that evening, he is so distraught that he doesn't want to attend the Halloween parade. He initially declines her invitation as she tries to persuade him to go. She eventually persuades him to don his Boba Fett costume when she manages to get him to talk to her. He finally gives in and follows her. That sequence in the movie was probably

the hardest. And she also told him that, whatever what others may say about you, they are unable to disturb your inner tranquility. and this makes to cope with my insecurities and find comfort in his faith, allowing me to remain unaffected by the hurtful things people say.

In summary, he bravely decided to accept himself as he is after going through some incredibly difficult circumstances. After all, he realizes that despite his many failures, his name is regarded with greatness.

This movie makes me cry, you might find it hard to understand if you do not have this type of insecurities. At the same time I can have the satisfaction from this too.

“Wonder” is an excellent illustration of the fact that a movie is a vital tool for thought transfer. According to Cillian Murphy, one of my favorite artists “we find so many empathies in novels because there you are putting yourself into somebody else's point of view, a movie can connect with someone and they feel seen and feel heard”, I can attest to the fact that these movies provide me with relief.

You should live your life cheerfully instead of pointing out insecurities that steals your happiness .It is important for individuals to develop a healthy self-image regardless of external opinion.

At that time, I broke down in tears and told my mother how I felt at that moment. She moved from dread of her to freedom, listening intently, showing me complete sympathy, and loving me as a mother would a daughter, Read a book if you're insecure about your knowledge. Go out and strike up a conversation with someone if you are shy about meeting new people and creating friends. If you are insecure about your skin, we'll do everything in our power to make you feel better about it. Furthermore, once you overcome your insecurities, recognize your initial area of weakness. After that, put it to use. If you feel bad about your skin, we will do anything; she told me how to get confidence.

Even though I am coping with skin issues, I do not want to hide from anyone. I do not want to use instead hydrate myself and eating natural, organic food might help in that way truly accept who am I breakthrough, I got peace of mind more than ever and decide how to love my face.

Free from hypocrisy. True elegance goes beyond mere appearances to encompass how we treat others and the positive energy we share. We are all here for a purpose - as humans, our fundamental purpose is simply to live. I believe in savoring each moment and avoiding excessive over thinking. I strive to stay present. Just give to love to the world and appreciate each other.

**You should live
your life cheerfully
instead of pointing
out insecurities that
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It is important for
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Science & Technology



The 5th Cyber Security Month opening ceremony at the Science Museum organized by Information Network Security Administration (INSA)

Cyber Security Month: Developing cyber security literacy to ensure digital sovereignty

BY DARGIE KAHSAY

In today's digital world, cyber-attack remains a serious global concern. It becomes a serious threat for development and security of states. Cyber security becomes a top national security issue for countries of the world, both developed and developing. Experts in security sector are incorporating cyber security as additional pillar of territorial sovereignty of a sovereign state, in addition to the three traditional contexts of land territory, territorial sea and air space. Due to the growing role of technology in each critical sector including the military and key government and private institutions, cyber security becomes as one pillar in national security of states.

Countries are experiencing unexpected and surprised cyber-attacks that have critical damages on socio-economic and political development of the states. As a result, countries are striving to develop cyber resilient capacity so as to identify cyber threats and to combat cyber-attacks before facing damages. In this regard, in addition to strengthening the capacity of national cyber institutions, so as to properly administer the people, process and technology, the three pillars of cyber security, countries are focusing on developing awareness for the general public.

Ethiopia is not an exception in facing the challenges of cyber security. Considering the growing threats of cyber-attacks, in addition to strengthening the capacity of Information Network Security Administration (INSA) and adapting latest policies and strategies, Ethiopia gives due focus on human resource development and awareness creation for the public about cyber security. As part of the national awareness creation efforts, since 2019 Ethiopia started a month-wide national campaign by naming October as Cyber Security Month. Since its inception, the Cyber Security Month serves as a vital platform for raising awareness about cyber security and the nation's digital transformation.

The Cyber Security Month campaign targets

raising awareness among institutions and citizens about the increasing cyber security threats, bolstering cyber sovereignty through effective national coordination. The campaign aims developing digital literacy and the threats in using digital infrastructures. This year's month-long campaign is underway themed "Critical Infrastructure Security for Digital Sovereignty," is ongoing organizing different awareness creation events and programs in Addis Ababa and beyond organized by Information network Security Administration (INSA).

As part of the awareness creation on cyber security, INSA organized a discussion on Ethiopia's amended Cyber Security Policy a week ago here in Addis Ababa. While opening the discussion, INSA Director General, Tigist Hamid said that in the current world cyber security becomes a key national security issue for sovereign states as equal as securing land territory, territorial sea and air space territory. As to her, unless countries have established strong and resilient cyber security, keeping only the security of tradition territorial security of nations does not make the states fully secure and safe.

Considering the critical role of cyber security on national security, cyber security is included in Ethiopia's National Security Policy. Similarly, Tigist said, INSA has amended the country's previous Information Security Policy by National Cyber Security Policy, approved on May 2024. As to Tigist, the previous policy, the National Information Security Policy, implemented since 2012 has served the country for nearly 13 years, but it has limitations since the policy was applied during the early years where the technology was started implementing in Ethiopia. As a result, it did not assess and identified the current cyber security trends and threats.

Considering the rapid development of the technology and its exposure to the emerging technologies like artificial intelligence (AI) and internet of things (IOT), INSA has amended the previous policy with a vibrant policy that assesses the current challenges and technological developments of the sector so as to protect Ethiopia's digital

sovereignty and key digital infrastructures.

According to the Director General, in the cyber security field the emerging technologies such as AI, IOT and other technologies are coming both with blessings and threats. As a result, states cyber security policies, strategies and activities should go parallel to the technological developments so as to build safe and secure digital infrastructure. Hence, Ethiopia's new Cyber Security Policy, according to Tigist, assesses the current technological developments and potential threats.

During a media briefing with regard to the 5th Cyber Security Month, INSA Director General noted that cyber threats are rising from time to time, underling Ethiopia's continued efforts to build resilient cyber space so as to protect the nation's digital infrastructure from attacks. As to Tigist, Ethiopia has intensified the efforts of combating the growing threat of cyber-attacks, mentioned Ethiopia's successful thwarting of some 8,854 attempted breaches during the 2023/24 budget year. Compared to the 2022/23 fiscal year attempted cyber-attacks, registered around 6,959, the attempted shows significant development the next year.

Tigist stated that data theft has become a daily concern in the digital era adding INSA's efforts in developing its capacity in addressing the rising number of cyber threats in Ethiopia. The efforts and initiatives being undertaken by INSA, according to the Director General, aims strengthening nation's cyber security and protect the nation's digital sovereignty. INSA Director General underlined that cyber-attacks are mounting targeting critical institutions and infrastructures such as hospitals, financial sectors and other critical national institutions. Despite INSA's efforts in combating these threats and continued to strengthen its capacity to defend the nation's cyber sector, Tigist underscores the importance of raising awareness for the general public and enhancing human resource development.

"Cyber Security cannot be ensured by a single institution," Tigist stated calling the joint

efforts of all stakeholders to work hand-in-hand to protect critical digital infrastructures and institutions from cyber-attacks. Tigist noted that National Cyber Security Month, a month-wide national campaign to develop awareness on cyber security, is part of INSA's broader strategy to educate the general public about cyber security and strengthen the agency's capacity to prevent cyber-attacks. In addition, INSA uses the month to strengthen the relations with key stakeholders such as financial institutions, hospitals, media, and government agencies.

Speaking during the opening ceremony of the 5th Cyber Security Month at the Science Museum, Governor of the National Bank of Ethiopia (NBE), Mamo Mihretu for his part said that cyber security has a significant impact on digital infrastructure. Especially with the growing role of digital sector in economic development and other critical sectors, strengthening cyber security of a country is an urgent task for states, he added. Ethiopia is working towards achieving Digital Ethiopia 2025 strategy; the governor stated emphasized the critical role of strengthening cyber security to safeguard the country's digital infrastructure and key sectors from cyber-attacks.

According to Mamo to build a resilient and secure cyber security, it is crucial to focus on strengthening skilled human resource development, implementing innovative mechanisms and introducing advanced technologies in the sector. "Cyber security is critical for advancing the digital sector and is deeply integrated with the protection of infrastructure, including telecommunications, energy, finance, transportation, and healthcare," the governor reiterated.

Considering the rising threats of cyber-attacks in mind and the development of digitalization, which is prone to cyber-crimes, citizens and institutions should give due focus to protect their digital resources by developing awareness about the cyber security and strictly following the instructions provided by INSA related institutions.

Society



Addressing barriers to empowering rural women

BY STAFF REPORTER

In many parts of the world, rural women's contribution to national development is huge and irreplaceable. Rural women, aside from carrying out domestic chores and being primary caregivers for children and the whole family, are essential agents in agricultural productivity and food security through growing crops and managing livestock.

In many countries, especially developing countries, rural women are key players in agricultural activities. They are often responsible for growing crops and managing livestock, which is vital to ensuring food security at the household and national levels.

According to studies, about 62 % of women in Africa are involved in agriculture and allied occupations, and around 40 % of the total food production labor is supplied by women.

The economic contribution of rural women is also huge. Engaging in various small-scale activities, such as selling handcrafted products, agricultural outputs and sale of eggs and chicken, Women play an important role in generating income and lessening the burden of poverty.

However, despite their key role in a given country's socioeconomic development, rural women's contribution often remains invisible and even left unrecognized or less appreciated.

To give recognition and commemorate the indispensable contribution of rural women to agriculture and rural development as well as the growth and development of countries and harnessing their full potential, the international community marks International Rural Women's Day (IRWD) every year on October 15.

This year's International Day of Rural Women was also observed here in Addis Ababa at African Union Hall under the theme "Empowering Women Living in Rural Areas through Education and Access to Technology: Bridging the Gap Inclusive and Sustainable Agri-food Systems in Africa."

According to documents, the day recognizes "the critical role and contribution of rural women, including indigenous women, in enhancing agricultural and rural

development, improving food security, and eradicating rural poverty." The role of women in national development cannot be overemphasized.

Speaking on the occasion, Minister of Women and Social Affairs Ergogie Tesfaye (PhD) underscored how education and technology can benefit rural women, the critical importance of investing in education, technology, and the development of inclusive systems for empowering rural women.

Minister Ergogie said that across Africa, the agri-food sector remains the backbone of many rural communities. "We know that the backbones of agri-food in rural areas are also women. It is the source of livelihoods, food security, and economic resilience for millions of families."

Women make up a significant portion of the agricultural workforce and play critical roles in household food security, and nutrition, as well as agricultural and rural development in general, she noted.

Despite their integral roles, rural women often face significant challenges that hinder their potential including limited access to education, finance, resources, and modern technology. However, despite the challenges, rural women are playing a key role in the efforts undertaken to ensure food security at the family level.

To this end and to make them productive citizens in every aspect they are engaged in, thereby improving the lives of rural women, various activities are being implemented through expanding access to education and technology.

What is more, laws and operational frameworks, which enable the rural women to have the right to land ownership and access to finance are being devised and implemented accordingly. In addition, women who are vulnerable to various man-made and natural disasters are being supported so as to enable them to lead a better life, the Minister added.

The Minister also emphasized three key pillars that are essential for empowering rural women which are education, technology, and the development of an inclusive system.

According to the Minister, increasing access to education, technology, and the development of an inclusive system enable

are not left behind in the digital age. By ensuring that women can access and utilize modern technology, we can open the doors to new opportunities in marketing, finance, and agricultural innovation, she pointed out.

Commissioner for Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment at the African Union Josefa Leonel Sacko said rural women are the backbone of the agricultural system in Africa. Thus, empowering rural women, who are the backbone of African agriculture, is a shared responsibility.

Noting that women play a crucial role in the African Agri-food system as they are the key drivers of agricultural growth, she said education is a powerful tool for women's empowerment.

Bridging the gap for an inclusive and sustainable agri-food system is critical, she said, adding that to build an inclusive and sustainable agri-food system, addressing the barriers that prevent rural women from fully participating in and benefiting from this system is essential.

According to the Commissioner, accessing quality education and expanding technology to improve the lives of African rural women is not something that can be said for tomorrow. Rural women should be supported in the area of agriculture to produce products that will benefit them economically beyond family level consumption.

She also urged member countries of the Union to work together to enable rural women to contribute their share to ensure the sustainable food security of the continent.

The International Day of Rural Women, established by the United Nations General Assembly in its resolution 62/136 of 18 December 2007, is observed on 15 October every year.

The day recognizes the critical role and contribution of rural women, including indigenous women, in enhancing agricultural and rural development, improving food security, and eradicating rural poverty.

The event was organized by the African Union Commission and partners with the overall objective of showcasing best practices of empowerment interventions and promoting the development of inclusive and sustainable Agri-food systems in Africa, ENA reported.

By ensuring that women can access and utilize modern technology, we can open the doors to new opportunities in marketing, finance, and agricultural innovation

rural women to find solutions for some challenges that they encounter in their day-to-day activities. These mechanisms help them to contribute to food security by boosting crop yields; reducing women's domestic and productive work by introducing labor-saving technologies; and increasing participation of women in the rural labor market through better communications.

Governments, private sectors, and international partners need to invest in infrastructure such as internet access, and mobile networks so that rural communities



This is Ethiopia

Ethiopia: The hidden gem of halal tourism

BY ESKINDER ABDI

Halal tourism is rapidly transforming the travel industry by catering to the specific needs of Muslim travelers. This trend prioritizes access to halal food, prayer facilities, and gender-segregated accommodations, allowing Muslims to explore the world without compromising their faith. As the Muslim middle class rises and global awareness increases, the halal travel market was projected to exceed 220 billion USD by 2020. With more Muslim travelers seeking halal-friendly destinations, the tourism industry must adapt to meet their unique needs, fostering cultural sensitivity and respect for Islamic values while unlocking new opportunities in this growing market.

In 2021, Muslims worldwide spent a total of 2.29 trillion USD across various sectors, including food, pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, fashion, travel, and media/recreation. This substantial spending reflects the significant growth potential of the global Muslim market, with projections suggesting it could reach approximately 2.8 trillion USD by 2025.

The halal industry is experiencing remarkable growth, particularly in halal tourism, which specifically caters to Muslim travelers seeking holiday services aligned with Islamic principles. In 2022, spending by Muslims on halal travel was estimated at around 283 billion USD, with approximately 160 million Muslim travelers.

While halal tourism primarily targets Muslim consumers, its appeal is increasingly recognized by non-Muslims who appreciate its emphasis on quality, ethical practices, and social responsibility. As misconceptions about halal products being exclusive to Muslims fade, new opportunities arise for both markets.

The term “halal,” derived from Arabic, signifies anything permissible in Islam and encompasses a broad framework governing various aspects of life; including consumption and social conduct. In the halal industry, the focus is on ensuring that products and services align with Islamic guidelines, emphasizing criteria such as animal welfare, hygiene, and health safety, as outlined by various halal certification organizations. The concept of “Halalan-Toyyiban” extends beyond mere compliance with Islamic law; it emphasizes quality and ethical standards - the production of food that is not only Halal (permissible) but also pure and wholesome). The increasing acceptance of halal practices among non-Muslim consumers underscores its broader appeal, driven by shared values of social responsibility and sustainability.

Halal tourism, also known as Islamic or Muslim-friendly tourism, represents an emerging sector within the global tourism industry. Grounded in Islamic principles,



Sof Omar Cave

it ensures that travel experiences comply with Shariah law. The UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) emphasizes key elements such as target consumers, destinations, and services in defining tourism, aligning with various scholarly interpretations of halal tourism. This form of tourism reflects the objectives of “Maqasid al-Shariah,” aiming to preserve faith, life, intellect, wealth, and lineage. By promoting responsible tourism practices, halal tourism serves not only Muslim travelers but also encourages broader sustainability values.

The importance of sustainable tourism highlights the need to prioritize environmental, economic, and socio-cultural impacts to protect biodiversity and promote responsible travel. This approach aligns with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set by the United Nations, using visitor-generated revenue to conserve tourist sites and habitats. According to the UNWTO, sustainable tourism effectively meets tourist needs while safeguarding host regions and balancing economic, social, and ecological demands.

Established in 2015 by all 193 UN member states, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) comprise 17 goals aimed at fostering global progress. Halal tourism emerges as a vital contributor to these goals, intertwining economic growth with ethical practices:

1. Good Health and Well-Being (SDG 3): Halal tourism emphasizes corporate social responsibility, ensuring the provision of healthy, halal-compliant food and services.
2. Gender Equality (SDG 5): Halal tourism initiatives, such as female-only hotel properties and dedicated services for women, contribute to a more equitable society.
3. Decent Work and Economic Growth (SDG 8): The halal travel industry generates employment and fosters economic stability, highlighting the industry’s potential for sustainable growth.
4. Responsible Consumption and Production (SDG 12): Halal tourism advocates for responsible consumption, promoting

cleanliness, hygiene, and animal welfare.

Ethiopia, the first African nation to embrace Islam, boasts a rich Islamic heritage that positions it uniquely for halal tourism. Although it may not yet be recognized as a major halal destination, the country’s historical and geopolitical significance provides a competitive edge in attracting Muslim tourists. The expanding global halal tourism market, fueled by a growing middle class and an increase in Muslim-friendly services, suggests that Ethiopia can tap into this lucrative industry.

Several key factors position Ethiopia as a premier destination for halal tourism. The country’s historical significance as the land of the First Hijra, where the ancient city of Axum welcomed early Muslim migrants, creates a deep connection that resonates with Muslim tourists. Ethiopia is also home to notable figures in Islamic history, such as Bilal, the first caller to prayer, enriching its cultural narrative.

Additionally, Ethiopia boasts a rich cultural heritage, featuring numerous Islamic sites, including the first mosque built by the Sahabas in 615 and the walled city of Harar, recognized as the fourth holiest city in Islam. Its strategic geopolitical position serves as a gateway for travelers from Muslim-majority countries, enhancing its attractiveness as a halal tourism hub.

With a substantial Muslim population in a country of over 120 million, Ethiopia has a robust domestic market for halal tourism. This growing demographic provides a strong foundation for developing and promoting halal-friendly services and experiences.

Ethiopia offers a wealth of opportunities for halal tourism, highlighted by notable sites:

- **Al-Nejashi Religious and Historic Sites:** Home to the first mosque in Africa, this site attracts halal-conscious visitors interested in its rich history.

- **The Ancient Walled City of Harar:** Known for its ancient mosques and vibrant markets, Harar is a hub of Islamic learning and culture.

- **The Palace of Aba Jifar:** This traditional wooden palace showcases the rich cultural heritage of the people and reflects the historical significance of the Jimma Kingdom.

- **The Sof Omar Cave:** One of Africa’s most spectacular underground caverns, this cave holds significant religious importance and offers eco-tourists a chance to explore nature and history.

- **Erta Ale:** This active volcano, known for its persistent lava lake, provides adventurous travelers with a unique experience beyond traditional tourism. Together, these factors and attractions make Ethiopia an emerging and promising destination for halal tourism.

Despite its potential, Ethiopia faces significant challenges in developing halal tourism. Among others, a lack of expertise within the Ethiopian tourism sector regarding halal practices complicates marketing efforts coupled with the threat of terrorism often misattributed to Islam, further impacts perceptions and traveler safety.

Ethiopia’s rich Islamic heritage, historical significance, strategic location and growing domestic demand create a promising landscape for halal tourism. By leveraging these unique assets and addressing the specific needs of Muslim travelers, Ethiopia can position itself as a leading destination for halal tourism in Africa and beyond. While establishing a vibrant halal tourism sector is fraught with challenges, the potential rewards are substantial. By fostering understanding and collaboration, promoting awareness of its Islamic heritage, and ensuring that tourism infrastructure meets halal standards, Ethiopia can unlock new avenues for economic growth and cultural exchange. This approach will not only attract international visitors but also empower local communities, making halal tourism a vital component of Ethiopia’s future.

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