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## Premier calls on Ethiopians to grab Ethio telecom shares



BY STAFF REPORTER

**ADDIS ABABA** – Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) has called on Ethiopians to purchase shares of Ethio telecom, following the company’s decision to offer 10% of its shares to Ethiopian citizens.

Speaking at a launch event yesterday, the Prime Minister emphasized that Ethio telecom, a profitable enterprise, is taking a major step by entering the stock market. He urged citizens to seize this unique opportunity as Ethiopia’s stock market becomes increasingly active.

He highlighted the role of digital transformation initiatives in preparing the ground for this share sale and hinted at future opportunities in other sectors, including hotels.

The first phase of the sale begins today via TeleBirr, with shares priced at 300 Birr each. A minimum purchase of 33 shares is required, amounting to a 9,900 Birr investment.

Ethio telecom’s CEO, Frehiwot Tamiru, announced that the company’s total share value stands at 100 billion Birr, with 10% allocated for public sale until January 3, 2025. Individual investments range from 9,900 Birr for the minimum package (33 shares) to a maximum of 999,900 Birr for 3,333 shares.

Photo: Dagne Abera

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## Coffee exports bring Ethiopia over 521 mln USD in Q1

BY MESERET BEHAILU

**ADDIS ABABA** – The Ethiopian Coffee and Tea Authority (ECTA) has announced a remarkable achievement in the first quarter of the 2024/25 fiscal year, generating 521.98 million USD from the export of 115,851.77 tons of coffee, tea, and spices. This performance

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## Delegates laud Ethiopia’s military diplomacy

BY ASHENAFI ANIMUT

**BISHOFTU** – African military delegates hailed military professionalism and capabilities of Ethiopia.

The delegates made the remark yesterday while visiting the Ethiopian Air Force (ETAF) headquarters and Bishoftu Automotive Manufacturing Industry.

Commending the visit, South African Defense Deputy Minister Bantu Holomiga highlighted that apart from training facilities, and promoting partnerships to ensure peace and security, Ethiopia is undertaking exemplary military professionalism, and infrastructural maintenance.

According to him, this visit strengthens capacity building within defense sectors through training, technology transfer, and

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## Macroeconomic Reforms: Changing face of FDI

BY YESUF ENDRIS

Ethiopia’s recent macroeconomic reforms, implemented during last July, are beginning to yield positive outcomes for the nation’s economic landscape, particularly in the realm of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). The Ethiopian Investment Commission (EIC) reports a notable 12% increase in FDI flows over the past three months compared to the same period last year, signaling a robust recovery in investment activities.

A key reform allowing foreign wholesalers and retailers to operate within the local market has particularly drawn interest from new investors. EIC Deputy Commissioner Zeleke Temesgen (PhD) noted, “About 72 investors have expressed interest in the newly opened sectors; 42 aim to engage in importing commodities, while 31 seek to invest in the export sector.” So far, 22

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# Nat'l Dialogue sole pathway to enduring peace: ENDC

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

**ADDIS ABABA-** National Dialogue is the best way out of resolving age-old disagreements in Ethiopia, Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission (ENDC) said.

In an interview with the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA), ENDC Commissioner Melaku Woldemariam said that National Dialogue is the top agenda and priority of the country. The major objective of the dialogue is to put an end to the age-long disagreements and reach to national consensus.

Thus, the National Dialogue would allow nation to resolve differences, thereby creating the sense of belongingness to one's country, he noted.

As to the Commissioner, Ethiopia is in the midst of instability and crisis in some parts of the nation. The only way out is through holding peaceful, inclusive and credible National Dialogue on major issues.

The dialogue, would in turn, lay better foundation to create strong nation, he emphasized. Moreover, it would play significant role in building new political landscape as well



*Gerad Mohammed Gerad Kulemeye*

as creating better democratic system.

For his take on the issue Elderly Father and Clan leader in Somali state, Gerad Mohammed Gerad Kulemeye emphasized that absence of room for dialogue is seemingly the main reason that has paid the Somali State unnecessary sacrifices.

On the other hand, the failure to resolve differences through dialogue has also pushed few individuals and groups to take power struggle as an option. To this end, the National Dialogue is the only option to reside and grow



*Melaku Woldemariam*

in peace, he stressed.

"The people of Somali aspire to see a nation that embraces the state where its right is equally ensured and respected. They also want to live in harmony with its neighboring states while applying a policy that represents pastoralists, he added.

Cognizant to the previous history of the state, village leader emphasized that the National Dialogue is timely and essential.

The dialogue would be instrumental in

representing each citizen in order to reach to consensus on major national issues. Hence, everyone needs to be responsible and play vital role for its success, he stressed.

Through dialogue, the nation could create a policy and legal framework that takes the people of Somali in to consideration. It could also play essential role in nation building where its brotherly people would live in harmony not conflict.

"Somali stayed in conflict for the past century. Had it been for power struggle, the state would have been in better shape today. This is why the dialogue is crucial for better outcome."

Fortunately, the rebel groups have come to their sense to sit around a table and settle disagreements through the national dialogue, he said, adding that other need to draw a lesson and put an end to conflicts. There is no better option than dialogue, he stressed.

ENDC is holding its agenda gathering in Somali State. It is to be recalled that the commission has finalized agenda gathering in Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa city administrations, Harari, Afar, Sidama, Benshangul and Central Ethiopia states.

## Ethiopia's capital market: path towards digital transformation

BY HAILE DEMEKE

Known for being one of the fastest-growing economies over the past two decades, Ethiopia is now embarking on an inclusive reform process and working aggressively towards realizing its vision of becoming African beacon of prosperity through the implementation of the Ten-year Development Plan (TYDP, 2021-2030).

The nation has achieved significant strides in reducing poverty and hunger, and improving health, education and gender outcomes over the past years. Since the reform process launched in 2018 the government has been exerting its utmost effort in liberalizing the economy of the nation which is long controlled by the government.

Similarly the nation has been challenged by wide range of problems over the past years. For instance, chronic foreign currency shortage, high inflation rate, macroeconomic imbalance and others are among the core problems. Therefore the government launched different initiatives among which liberalizing state owned companies to private sector is at the forefront.

The broader initiative launched by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) to privatize state owned companies is a significant step in stimulating the economy of the nation. On the other hand Ethiopia launched Homegrown Economic Reform (HGER) agenda, supported by the IMF program, to ease pressing problems and take measures such as moving to a market-determined exchange rate, combating inflation, mobilizing domestic revenues, and restoring debt sustainability which are important steps to put the economy of the nation on the right track.



As part of broad economic reform initiated in 2018 Ethiopia has recently introduced a bold macro-economic reform policy aimed at stabilizing its economy, which has been strained by a severe foreign currency shortage, rising inflation, and other challenges. The broader economic reform is part of the nation's journey towards digital transformation.

Back in 2023 the government established Ethiopian Securities Exchange (ESX) through a pioneering public-private partnership with the Government of Ethiopia through the Ethiopian Investment Holdings (EIH). The establishment ESX is part of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's push to open up the country which is heavily controlled by the state to greater private investment.

The introduction of the ESX is set to play a crucial role in this transformation and established with the primary objectives of educating the wider public on the value of investing in regulated securities. By cultivating a culture of investment and financial literacy, the ESX empowers Ethiopians to participate actively in capital markets.

The nation has implemented several reforms to open the economy to the private sector

and the launch of a securities exchange will be a catalyst for attracting new investment from the private sector. The exchange will be a platform for the privatization of Ethiopia's state-owned enterprises and will help Ethiopian businesses, including small and medium-size enterprises to raise capital.

Recently Ethio-telecom, the country's largest telecom operator, is to begin selling its shares ahead of listing on the new Ethiopian Stock Exchange. This move is part of the government's privatization strategy aimed at driving economic growth and transformation. Commenting on the issue ESX Chief Executive Officer, Tilahun Ismael (PhD), hailed the sale as a milestone in the nation's privatization process, launched by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD). "As Ethiopia embraces digital transformation and economic growth, this bold move is crucial for the country's progress," he stated.

The government's "Digital Ethiopia 2025" strategy includes stimulating the economy and privatizing state-owned enterprises. Ethio-telecom will be the first company to sell its shares on the Ethiopian Stock Exchange, setting a precedent for other companies to follow.

## Gov't measures create vibrant hospitality industry: MoT

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

**ADDIS ABABA-** Measures taken by the government has improved the expansion of hotels and service sectors in various parts of the country, so said Ministry of Tourism (MoT).

MoT State Minister Seleshi Girma told local media that the government is providing land, technical support for both local and international investors that are engaged in hotel and tourism sector.

It has also allowed various incentives such as a five year income tax exemption for investors engaged in the aforementioned sector, he added.

Following the action, the nation has seen various constructions of hotel and resorts in various parts of the country but mainly in main cities.

He further noted that local investors that are said to be competitive at international level have built hotel business chain which is promising to enhance sector's potential.

Nonetheless, poor infrastructure in tourist destination remained a challenge. Private sectors are being shy to engage in areas with low infrastructure development. The private sector, however, are expected to invest in rural areas that are enriched in tourism potentials, he stressed.

As to the State Minister, the Ministry of Tourism has introduced new Hotel star rating legal framework and service quality assurance to allow newly built hotel and service sector to be graded while enabling the existing hotels update their rates.

Getahun Alemu, President of Ethiopian Hotel and Tourism Association, on his part highlighted that several tourism destinations are under construction in different parts of the country.

He also mentioned the emerging smart hotels in the city which are believed to be one of tourist attraction in the nation.



## Diaspora lauds Ethiopia's macroeconomic reforms for boosting investment

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

**ADDIS ABABA-** The implementation of macroeconomic reforms has significantly encouraged Diaspora investment in Ethiopia, according to members of the Diaspora community.

In interviews with the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA), Diaspora members highlighted that recent reforms, particularly the floatation of foreign exchange, have been highly beneficial. These measures are expected to foster various economic advantages for both the country and the Diaspora community, substantially contributing to Ethiopia's economy.

Haileyesus Mengistu, a resident of California, USA, emphasized that the reforms are greatly motivating Diaspora members to invest in their homeland. He pointed out that the government's extensive reforms, especially the implementation of foreign exchange floatation,



Haileyesus Mengistu

have been advantageous to the community. The changes have allowed Diasporas to commence investment activities in the country, and as a result, Haileyesus is preparing to invest in the hotel industry in the near future. The reforms also contribute to an increase in foreign



Elias Kebede

exchange remittances, he noted.

Elias Kebede, who resides in Dubai, United Arab Emirates (UAE), added that the recent macroeconomic policies are critical for attracting large-scale Diaspora investments to Ethiopia. He is finalizing preparations to

engage in various investment sectors, in line with the country's investment proclamation and work permit regulations.

Ethiopia's recent commitment to implementing comprehensive macroeconomic reform policies aims to correct foreign exchange distortions, address the structural balance of payments deficit, and reduce inflation by modernizing the monetary policy framework. These reforms are designed to create a favorable balance to meet national development needs by increasing domestic income and addressing debt vulnerability.

Additionally, the reforms aim to enhance the inclusiveness, competitiveness, and resilience of the financial sector. By improving government service delivery, addressing climate change, and ensuring food sovereignty, the reforms seek to build a robust, inclusive, and sustainable economic system, according to experts.

### Delegates laud Ethiopia's military...

the exchange of knowledge.

He also expressed commitment to further strengthen the bilateral agreements in the area between the two countries.

For his part, the Republic of Uganda Defense and Veteran Affairs Minister Jacob M. Oboth remarked that the country is undertaking a historical and the first-of-its-kind military professionalism in the continent.

"Ethiopia should also be commended for its remarkable achievement," he added.

Moreover, the minister stated that Ethiopia a hub of Pan-Africanism, has been playing a historical role in peacekeeping and regional stabilities. Also, it is one of the top peace keeping troops contributing countries in Africa.

Ethiopia has shared notable reform lessons in military diplomacy and security sector achieved over the last six years, the Ethiopian Defense Minister said, expressing commitments towards common engagements.

During the course of the visit, Ethiopian Defense Minister Ayisha Mohammed (Eng.) told The Ethiopian Press Agency that the Ethiopian Air Force (ETAF) with

its profound and well-developed capacity remains a testament to realize the continental peace and security.

She has also mentioned that the experience sharing, discussion and leveraging cooperation in the area among the African nations would be a path to address the contemporary security challenges across the continent.

As part of its continental commitment, she said that Ethiopia has remained steadfast to safeguard the African shared future and build reliable standby force.

She said: "Ethiopia has undertaken fruitful bilateral discussions with Algeria, Libya, Sudan and other countries to work cooperatively to further strengthen diplomatic military engagements, mentioning countries keen interest."

Regarding the overall development activities made in the air force compound, Aisha remarked that as the institution is equipped with state of the art technology, it actively engages in the military operations and various developmental activities as well.

During the visit, the delegates visited air force bases, heavy maintenance center and flying school.

### Macroeconomic Reforms: Changing...

proposals have been submitted, with 18 investors already licensed to commence operations.

During a recent address to the joint session of the House of People's Representatives and the House of Federation, President Taye Atseke-Selassie outlined ambitious economic goals for the fiscal year, projecting an 8.4% growth rate, with value-added exports anticipated to reach five billion USD and total export revenues hitting 10 billion USD.

Zelege highlighted an influx of Chinese investors following the reforms, which have significantly bolstered Ethiopia's economy through capital flow, job creation, and technological advancements. Currently, there are about 3,303 Chinese projects in Ethiopia, with a combined portfolio valued at 8.5 billion USD. Since 2022, 322 new Chinese investors have been licensed, demonstrating a significant increase in their activity.

Aggregate job creation linked to these investments has reached 325,470, establishing China as Ethiopia's leading source of FDI. Notably, the Eastern Industrial Park in Dukem, home to 153 manufacturing companies, is predominantly occupied by Chinese firms.

In the last fiscal year, Ethiopia attracted 3.9 billion USD in FDI, marking a 14% increase from the preceding year.

Chinese firms operating in Ethiopia have expressed optimism regarding the recent reforms. Accordingly, Linda-Ethiopia Garment's Director General GeYifan noted that the new market-oriented foreign currency regime has eased prior challenges, allowing his company to better serve the local market. "The government has provided us with better opportunities and investment incentives," he stated.

Similarly, Huajian Aluminum PLC's General Manager David Zhou praised the government's efforts to address foreign currency shortages and create new opportunities in various sectors. "While we are currently supplying the local market, we plan to export as challenges are resolved," he said.

EIC's another Deputy Commissioner, Dagato Kunbie, emphasized the positive reception of legal reforms enabling foreign participation in wholesale and retail trading. "We have received numerous requests from foreign investors following the announcement of this reform, and several companies will soon enter the local market," he noted, reiterating the government's commitment to support foreign investors who make significant contributions to the local economy.

With projections exceeding five billion USD in new investments, Ethiopia is poised for a sharp increase in FDI, promising to enhance its economic landscape further.

### Coffee exports bring Ethiopia over 521 mln ...

significantly exceeded the authority's original target of 427.10 million USD from 83,294.25 tons.

This success represents a 46% increase in revenue, equating to an additional 165.06 million USD, alongside a 69% rise in export volume, with 48,371.16 tons more than anticipated. In September alone, Ethiopia earned 142.51 million USD from 33,997.27 tons of these products, surpassing the target of 122.94 million USD from 24,061.78

tons. This achievement marks a 62% revenue increase (54.66 million USD) and an 82% rise in volume (15,344.38 tons).

Focusing specifically on coffee, Ethiopia secured 519.02 million USD from 115,174.75 tons exported in the past three months, reflecting a staggering 123% increase in revenue and a 146% increase in volume compared to the target of 422.99 million USD from 78,989.90 tons. This resulted in an additional 47,509.55 tons in

exports and 164.81 million USD in extra revenue.

Germany emerged as the leading destination for Ethiopian coffee, importing 28,398.68 tons (25%) and generating 113.58 million USD (22%) in revenue. Saudi Arabia followed closely, importing 16,838.56 tons (15%) and contributing 72.16 million USD (14%). Belgium ranked third, with imports of 12,503.69 tons (11%) generating 58.82 million USD (11%).

Other key markets include the U.S., South Korea, Japan, the UAE, Italy, Jordan, and France, which collectively accounted for 78% of Ethiopia's total coffee export revenue and volume. These top ten countries contributed 55% more revenue and 83% more volume compared to the same period last year.

The ECTA's achievements underscore the growing significance of Ethiopia's coffee, tea, and spice exports on the global market.

# Opinion

## Networked fight against terrorism in the Horn of Africa

BY GETACHEW MINAS

For years, the superpowers have assumed that the Horn of Africa is a fertile ground for terrorism. It has come under high scrutiny as it is a strategic location in the fight against terrorism. Reports reveal that some governments in the Horn admitted that a network of terrorists was considering an attack on alien powers. This confirmed the presence of terrorist groups in the region.

Among the Horn countries, Ethiopia has not been openly confronted with fundamentalists, as they tend to identify with ethnic rather than religious groups in the country. It is also revealed that Muslims and Christians are intermingled peacefully throughout most parts of the country. Islam in Ethiopia has been and continues to be peaceful. However, some neighboring countries in the Horn have been important locations for terrorist activities. These countries attracted terrorists for their transiting services rather than as a base for global terrorism. But, in later years, these countries became attractive to terrorists.

A few of the Horn countries have played a great role in religious terrorism that affected the people of the region. Initially, they have provided transit points for movement of people and goods and services through the porous borders preferred for terrorist attacks. Some countries of the Horn have been considered focal areas for stretching the gap between moderate and radical religious groups.

A few leaders in the Horn used the war against terrorism as an excuse to eliminate all domestic political dissidents in their specific countries. Other countries in this region stood at crossroads without revealing their intent. They have been attempting to conduct peace negotiations with the opposition armed groups in order to improve relations within the Horn region. However, these efforts have been obstructed by leaders of movements that remained committed to their religious agenda. In a few cases, religious agendas have been used as a cover for political missions to access power.

It is reported that an effective response to terrorist activities in the Horn region has been designed by the superpowers. These responses include increased and targeted foreign aid and improved regional intelligence capabilities. These measures are to be accompanied by increased political pressure on other foreign forces that encourage radicalism through religious groups, charities, and training programs in the Horn countries.

On the other hand, antiterrorism measures are seriously affected by hostilities, conflicts and wars among some countries of the Horn. The relationship between the historically

linked and neighboring countries of the Horn has been deteriorating for a long time. Any peace deal that brought these countries together years ago now seems to have been lost in an enduring rivalry, contest and challenge in the region. The sources of tensions include access to the sea and a lack of peace among neighboring countries.

Experts are of the opinion that the neighboring countries of the Horn cannot afford escalation of conflict and rivalry. These conflicts call for to terrorist activities in the area. Yet, open conflict remains a possibility with outcomes short of direct wars. This is tantamount to a return to the sensitive “no war, no peace” situation of previous decades.

It is well noted that a few countries in the region have a disdain for multilateral institutions and forums that endeavor to create peace in the Horn. These countries have also strained relations with many governments in the region. All these factors have contributed to inaccurate designations of leaders of the Horn countries. However, all these reflect the policy of these countries to preserve their independence in a fast changing geopolitical environment. The attempt by leaders of the Horn countries, such as Ethiopia, to preserve their independence is sometimes impeded by extreme poverty, hunger, conflicts, wars and terrorism.

Some of the leaders of the Horn countries have tried to maintain peace and order along their borders. They signed agreements with great optimism to resolve border disputes. These accords were greeted with optimism in the neighboring countries and by the international community. However, experts examined how the intensity of regional competition is affecting the political and security situations in the Horn.

Moreover, they have been complicating the interests of external powers in the region. These regional competitors have been focusing on poverty reduction strategy to redirect the attention of the people from politics. They also used this strategy to dilute the influence of terrorists in the Horn region.

The governments of the Horn such as Ethiopia have also devised a means to engage in local mediation and conflict resolution strategies to defuse social tensions. They also monitored violent extremist activities that spread among the young people who seek jobs but remained unemployed for a long time. These job-seekers usually left their country as economic migrants. However, some of them have returned as potential terrorists.

The returnees also became radicalized adherents to terrorism without a properly defined goal. The governments of the Horn region, including Ethiopia, have been

devising strategies to repulse these terrorists before they succeed in influencing the poverty ridden people within their boundaries.

To succeed in the implementation of this strategy they have sought for regional cooperation among the Horn countries. They also requested for global assistance in the fight against terrorism. When seeking such assistance, some of the leaders of governments in the Horn regions had the hidden agenda of maintaining their own power and authority.

Experts on the politics of the Horn have also suggested that these leaders used their authority for the exploitation of resources by subjugating their citizens. These resources are diverted from funding development projects to financing antiterrorist schemes. This approach is two-pronged, one for reversing domestic opposition and the other for eliminating terrorists in the Horn countries.

Support for local terrorist activities in the sub-region has come from global violent extremist organizations. To resist these entities, there was a need to solicit strong support from the global powers that pay great attention to the Horn region. These powers have provided financial, military, and capacity building support to the countries of the region for fighting terrorists. The Horn countries have participated in AU-led counterterrorism efforts by contributing troops to missions in some countries of the region.

In this effort, Ethiopia has participated in IGAD and its Counter-Terrorism program and training. It has also participated in the IGAD Security Sector Program, which builds regional capacity to detect, counter and repulse terrorist activities. Ethiopia supports global efforts against terrorism, using international directives that seek to divert terrorism. Recognizing that terrorism is a global issue, IGAD has continued to encourage dissemination of critical information concerning cross-border terrorist activity.

Ethiopia is a peace loving country that keeps terrorism at bay. It continues to be an active partner with the superpowers on counterterrorism issues. It has made important amendments to its Antiterrorism Proclamation that outlaws terrorist activities. The terrorist threats that originate from some neighboring countries are serious challenges to peace and security in Ethiopia.

Domestically, armed groups that promote ethnic issues are also persistent domestic threats. Both the external and internal factors escalate the political tensions within the country. The leaders of these terrorist groups aspire to grab power at the cost of the lives and properties of Ethiopians. Considering the death of thousands of people, the superpowers have repeatedly called for the immediate end to hostilities by all parties. Ending of such hostilities facilitates the delivery of

humanitarian assistance to affected regional states of the country.

Some countries of the Horn introduced aviation security for the safety of passenger and cargo. But, lack of effective control has made the security system vulnerable to foreign intrusion. These countries resorted to the use of advanced technology that enhanced passenger security. The application of this tech has boosted security for passengers and for controlling terrorists. The upgraded and automated control system would immensely reduce domestic risks contrived by local terrorists.

Border security has been a persistent concern for the governments of the Horn countries. These governments have worked to tighten border controls within their borders. They installed latest techs for controlling several ports of entry. Assisted by these techs, some of the governments in the Horn area have been able to arrest several local and global terrorists. These terrorists have been accused of committing crimes against popular figures and destroying properties. They also conducted terrorist incidents and launched offensive acts against law enforcement agencies.

Surprisingly, the terrorists asserted that they acted in self-defense against planned government actions to remove them from their country. The governments of the Horn countries, including Ethiopia, have been seeking and receiving military assistance from friendly governments and powers. There have been reports that all parties to the Horn conflict are accused of human rights violations, atrocities and abuses committed by their forces.

Some of the governments of the Horn have been countering violent extremism for a long time. These countries have given top priority for threats from terrorists of the region. They have designed strategies focusing on domestic and external threats. Domestically, they have developed their own specific schemes to eliminate factors that help the terrorists to recruit the unemployed youth.

The governments of the region have embarked on economic development programs that would create employment for the job seekers. They also closely monitored violent extremist activities that would hamper the peaceful existence of the Horn countries, including Ethiopia. The governments of the Horn continue to work on strategies that would reduce or eliminate terrorism through encouraging peaceful coexistence among the countries of the Horn. Each and every country in the Horn of Africa should, therefore, cooperate in promoting cross-border security for the benefit of the impoverished, war stricken and displaced persons of the region.

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



# Editorial

## Signs of hope as a result of macro-economic reform

Latest reports indicate that the FDI has continued to grow. Hence all stakeholders need to step up efforts to build up on current factors that are attracting more Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and pave the way out of poverty for the country.

Indeed FDI is something all country strives for. Attracting more FDI helps a country to get more forex, create more jobs and achieve success.

Ethiopia has actually opened up its economy only for private sector and foreign investment only for 3 decades that followed the nearly two decades of command economy. So the first few years of the operation of the market economy was responsible for healing the wounds of the command economy that gutted down the economy.

Yet despite the statistical increases in foreign investment and economic growth the economy that started to revive in the years of the free market economy still had challenges to attain the required momentum as there were some policy and procedural hurdles that fettered the smooth operation.

Therefore there was a need for radical action that can lift the economy out of the business as usual trend of development and put in place the necessary policy framework so that the country's economic development can experience genuine growth.

After the slow but continuous growth of the investment flow to the country Ethiopia is now able to own one of the five largest economies of the continent that combined together accounts for about half of the GDP of the continent. This being a motivating factor, there is a need to world more on incentivizing local private sector as well as to attract foreign investment in fields to catch up with the rapidly growing demand of the people.

The economy needs to address the challenges in job opportunities and cost of living among others. In this regard, the measures that the government started taking since last July need due collaboration so as to address the problems durably.

The macro economic reform has enshrined actions that should have been taken years ago to boost the role of the private sector including foreign investors. Accordingly the government has taken measures to liberalize the economy through allowing the floating of foreign exchange, opening up of sectors like finance and merchandise that were restricted for foreigners for long time, among others.

With the number and capital of those foreign investors who opt to engage in the already opened up sectors increasing, the country is full of hopes to see the influx of more companies in the months and years to come. There are some improvements already flourishing in the country. For instance the operation of the Ethiopian Security Exchange (ESX) in the coming days, which is the first capital market in the country, is a great leap forward.

Ethio telecom, the state owned service provider which monopolized the industry for decades is now finalizing preparations to sell shares which amounts to 10% of its total capital. The bold and pioneering endeavor of ETHiotelecom is a pace setter for many of the state owned enterprises as well as profitable business to harness the capital market in the country for effective development progress.

As all these activities go smoothly the country would be able to entertain the possible inflow of investment and make the best out of it for the benefit of the grassroots.



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# Opinion

## Diplomatic victory over colonial period treaties

BY GIRMACHEW GASHAW

In this era of globalization, the only way out of poverty and backwardness is through collaboration to develop the resources at hand. Africa, the owner of untapped natural resources, still struggles to emerge from poverty due to a lack of internal peace and coordination with other countries on the continent.

Many governments in Africa are attempting to change this reality, but working independently is ineffective. Instead of coordinating with other countries in the continent, they seek assistance from international institutions to develop their resources. However, most international organizations that come to Africa aim to exploit the continent's resources with limited local involvement, falling short of African countries' expectations.

African countries lack the capacity to exploit their own resources for the benefit of their people. While some attempt to develop their resources with foreign assistance, the cost often exceeds their financial capabilities. As a result, African countries end up relying on well-developed countries for loans and grants, which come with political and economic obligations.

Ethiopia, a country of over 120 million people, is one of the African countries going through this process. Despite facing challenges, Ethiopia has maintained its sovereignty and not succumbed to foreign pressures.

When Ethiopia began the construction of the Grand Renaissance Dam, it lacked the human and financial capital to complete the project. AS the country cannot obtain loan from international lenders or donors due to opposition by the lower riparian countries, Ethiopia was left with the only option of raising money from the grassroots.

Although the public contributed significantly to the dam project, downstream countries posed obstacles citing colonial water agreements. In order to respond to this question, it is imperative to recall the background history of the colonial agreement. In 1880, European countries, as per the agreement made to segregate Africa, Italians forces invaded Ethiopia following the disagreement between the two countries in relation to the Wuchale agreement.

Accordingly, the Italian version says Ethiopia had no authority to communicate with other countries without the consent of Italy. When Emperor Menelik II of Ethiopia understood the spirit of the letter written in Italian language, he implored Italy to approve it. But, things were not changed, and the emperor decided to engage in war with Italy and end the war in victory.

In 1890, Great Britain prepared a proclamation to fulfill its interest in being influential over the Nile River. Before Ethiopia revived from the war of Adowa, the British government came up with another agenda. In 1902, they prepared an

agreement which had five articles to force Ethiopia to sign the wrong agreement through its representative. Especially, article three of the agreement said no one should work on any project on the Nile River without requesting the consent of the British.

Apart from this, in 1929, the British made an agreement with Egypt representing Uganda and Kenya, which were under its colony. Repeatedly said, this is the agreement that marginalized Ethiopia. Accordingly, Egypt has a 48 billion cubic meter Nile water share while Sudan has only four billion cubic meters. This agreement surprisingly gave Egypt the right to control Nile tributaries. Ethiopia has not recognized this unfair agreement.

The third agreement was made between Sudan and Egypt in 1959. This agreement raised the water quota of Egypt and Sudan to 55.5 billion cubic meters and 18.5 billion cubic meters respectively. This agreement also marginalized Ethiopia. The basis for all these agreements is British.

Ethiopia engaged in diplomatic efforts to address these challenges and eventually reached agreements with Nile riparian countries to equitably use the Nile waters. The Nile River Basin Cooperative Framework Agreement came into effect on October 13, 2024, establishing the Nile River Basin Commission to oversee the shared water resources.

Ethiopia asserts its autonomous right to utilize rivers, including the Abbay, while acknowledging the dependence of downstream nations on Nile waters. This recognition has led Ethiopia to advocate for the principle of equitable and fair utilization of these waters. International law governs the relationships between nations and has evolved since the 17th century to address non-navigational uses of international watercourses, initially granting states absolute rights over water within their territories. However, as the implications for downstream countries became evident, the law adapted to include concepts of fair utilization.

The Cooperative Framework Agreement (CFA) aims to rectify historical injustices and promote equitable use of Nile waters, fostering mutual understanding and shared responsibility among Nile Basin States. Ethiopia believes that the CFA will benefit all basin countries and lead to a sustainable future. Currently, six out of eleven countries have ratified the CFA, which emphasizes the importance of collective action for economic integration. Ethiopia maintains that fair and equitable use of Abbay waters can meet its needs while encouraging all Nile Basin countries to ratify the CFA for mutual benefit. Unity among these nations is seen as essential for strength and effectiveness in managing shared resources.

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



# Business & Economy

## Ethiopia's macroeconomic reforms leading to a more resilient economy



BY ADDISALEM MULAT

It is abundantly clear that the freshly applied macroeconomic reform policy beyond a shadow of a doubt plays a huge role in taking the country's economy to new frontiers through the passage of time. In addition to boosting substantially the competitive capacity of exports and imports, the reform has already jumpstarted boosting competitiveness and getting to the bottom of predicaments revolving around foreign currency shortage.

It has to be borne in mind that shortage of foreign currency in numerous occasions had been throwing cold water on the various export and import sector of the country. However, on the heels of the newly implemented macroeconomic reforms policy, the country's economy has set in motion attaining the intended target and moving forward in the right direction in the face of some challenges that need a quick fix.

It is widely acknowledged that since the implementation of the macroeconomic reforms, satisfactory results have been witnessed in a wide spectrum of sectors in a short period of time. It is envisioned that this successful move will take the country to new horizons and prospects at the earliest possible juncture.

In the present climate, investors have got going making the most of the newly implemented macroeconomic reform policy by increasing the export of goods and bolstering capacity. More to the point, the reform has been fashioning favorable conditions for Ethiopian Diasporas residing in the length and breadth of the world.

It is an undeniable fact that Ethiopia's macroeconomic reform policy has been getting involved in unlocking and transforming the country's economy. Moreover, it is anticipated that the new policy injects a new release of life into tackling deeply-ingrained economic structural issues encompassing foreign exchange distortions and macroeconomic inequities in every nook and cranny of the country.

The new macroeconomic reform has created favorable conditions geared to benefit the diaspora community by providing substantial benefits to it, according to the Ethiopian Diaspora Service (EDS).

As part of the country's macroeconomic reform, an application called "unite.et" and that enables the opening of accounts and transfer of foreign currency has been launched, it was learned.

Through this application, it is possible to open foreign currency accounts with the desired amount, including current, savings, and fixed-term options. Ethiopians living inside the country and abroad as well as foreigners of Ethiopian origin and foreigners residing in Ethiopia can access the service.

Ethiopian Diaspora Service Deputy Director General, Belayneh Akinaw told

ENA that the macroeconomic reform has brought numerous benefits to the Diaspora community. One of these benefits is enabling the diaspora community to legally exchange foreign currency and prevent illegal transfers.

Allowing the Diaspora community to open foreign currency accounts within the country will enable them to participate in various investment sectors, he added. According to him, this will increase the country's foreign currency reserves.

The reform provides opportunity for the diaspora community to significantly contribute to the country's economy, both directly and indirectly.

The deputy director general revealed that the country expects to get 10 billion USD in remittances this Ethiopian fiscal year. In addition, the Diaspora community has been strengthening its participation in the construction of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD). For instance, 329,000 USD has been raised through a recently launched platform, Belayneh stated.

Since the beginning of the GERD project, the diaspora community has contributed 50 million USD, and efforts are being made to raise three million USD this year through various initiatives. It is evident that the complete realization of the macroeconomic reform policy will attract investors from various parts of the world.

Notwithstanding the fact that some doomsayers bend over backwards with the objective of badmouthing the positive moves surfacing on a national scale regarding the implementation of macroeconomic reform policy, all their endeavors ended up going for nothing.

In addition to assisting the progress of foreign market expansion by revenue enhancement and strengthening capacities, the macroeconomic reform policy has jumpstarted yielding results and making progress in the right direction. It is true that the recently implemented macroeconomic reform policy gives birth to open the door for export earnings, uplift competitiveness and other things of a similar kind.

Taking the benefits they secure out of the newly implemented policy, Ethiopian Diasporas in the present circumstances have begun undertaking the diaspora community to legally exchange foreign exchange system and open foreign currency accounts and which enable them to play a part in a wide spectrum of investments sectors.

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed recently announced that Ethiopia has embarked on full implementation of macroeconomic reform policy, according to sources.

In a macro-economic reform policy statement issued, Prime Minister Abiy elaborated that the government has been implementing numerous economic reforms to address longstanding structural problems, including debt burden, inflation, unemployment, and low productivity following the political

change which ushered in 2018.

The first phase of the Home-Grown Economic Reform Program (HGER 1.0), introduced in 2019, included policy ideas from macro-financial to structural and sectoral, Abiy pointed out.

Through HGER 1.0, Ethiopia has achieved significant economic objectives, correcting imbalances, alleviating debt, and expanding growth sources, despite remaining reform areas.

Ethiopia has become one of the fastest-growing economies in the world, achieving an average GDP growth rate of 7.1% from 2019 to 2023, he said.

Consequently, the premier added that Ethiopia has become a significant player in the African economy and demonstrated commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals, building the largest economy in East Africa and the third-largest in Sub-Saharan Africa.

The policy statement detailed the key pillars of the Homegrown Economic Reform Program (HGER 2.0), the second phase of the country's economic transformation efforts including establishing a modern macroeconomic policy framework to ensure stability and resilience as well as boosting competitiveness by improving the investment and trade environment, expanding productive capacity and productivity across sectors, enhancing public sector capabilities for efficient service delivery.

"This comprehensive reform agenda will enable us to achieve high and stable economic growth, maintain single-digit inflation, and build a globally competitive economic system," he said.

The reform measures target a range of issues, including foreign exchange distortions, financial sector strengthening, inflation control, tax revenue mobilization, and improving the business climate.

Speaking to the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA), Ethiopian Economics Association Senior Analyst Arega Shumetie (PhD) recently emphasized that the reform would address the foreign currency shortage, thereby enhancing the nation's export performance.

He highlighted that the association's survey indicated the reform would significantly influence the cereals and oilseeds sector by reducing parallel market activities and illegal trading, both of which have long plagued the industry. Beyond increasing investment, the reform is expected to create new market opportunities. "By addressing the foreign currency shortage, the reform will stabilize market costs and open doors for traders," he said.

While acknowledging that internal and external factors might challenge the reform's timing, the analyst warned of potential concerns related to brokers emerging within the system. He also noted that 85% of input for local manufacturing companies is imported, with exporters previously

benefiting from this system. However, he stressed the need for cautious oversight in import-export operations with a focus on adding value to products.

State Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Mesganu Arga, welcomed Alexis LeMek, the French Ambassador-Designate to Ethiopia, during a meeting held at his office, according to MoFA.

The two sides exchanged views on strengthening bilateral relations between Ethiopia and France, emphasizing opportunities for deeper collaboration.

Ambassador Mesganu reaffirmed Ethiopia's commitment to enhancing ties in the areas of trade, investment, and economic cooperation, highlighting the country's potential and extending an invitation to French investors.

The State Minister took note of France's role as a strategic partner and appreciated the growing relationship between the two nations. He further commended France's support for Ethiopia's macroeconomic reforms and its assistance in Ethiopia's efforts to join the World Trade Organization (WTO).

In response, Ambassador Alexis reiterated France's strong support for Ethiopia's economic reforms and expressed commitment to further strengthening the economic partnership between the two countries.

There is no doubt that the reform policy is crucial to manage the economy, raise overseas market, encourage investment, and enhance overseas currency earnings. Other than that the newly implemented macroeconomic reform policy from time to time will lessen exchange rate variations.

It is certain that the macroeconomic reform policy chips in on fashioning great opportunity for competitive funding opportunities on a national scale. The implementation of the reform policy of Ethiopia has created competitive income generation option in the country.

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

Addressing investors' concerns in the recent past, Governor Mamo stated that the government has implemented key measures in the macroeconomic reform sector, which are already yielding positive results. The primary goal of the reforms is to strengthen private sector participation by creating a stable macroeconomic environment.

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



# Art & Culture

Book review

## Mischief of the Gods

BY ATA

**Title: Mischief of the Gods****Author: Itsushi Kawase /PhD****Publisher Awai Books****Part I**

Kawase's *Mischief of the Gods* is originally written in Japanese and translated to English by Jeffery Jhonson. In his epilogue Kawase states that his "book is an attempt to get closer, sing closer, and tell stories about the people I have met and interacted with in the streets of Gondar, Ethiopia and elsewhere."

Kawase has really attempted to get closer and observe to come up with, I would say, several short story sketches in his book of memoir titled *Mischief of the Gods*. Every story has its own character, which is vivid, lively, and mind-blowing. Of all his acquaintances and friends while he was living at Gondar, Kawase chose the peculiar/distinct ones for his inclusion in his book of memoir. *The Spirits of Piazza* brings us three main characters: the flute boy/Balewashintu that's nicknamed the Joker, the whistling teenager Gedamu, and the deaf showgirl Attu.

Each character brings forth some peculiar Ethiopian life style, belief, traditional and home remedial practices and the regular hustle and bustle with all its interpretations and implications.

For instance *The Joker* is a typical representative of flutists not only in Gondar but throughout the country who earn their living walking in town playing their flute and collecting tips to earn a living.

Gedamu, who is blind comes from the Semein Mountain and earns a living whistling. Gedamu whistles, putting his hand at his mouth and blows out a unique mysterious sound.

Kawase brings to light the commonly believed cause of the disease Mich, and the home remedy herbs Haragressa and Damakese.

"Mich metagn" or "I got struck by Mich" is a common term in Ethiopia used to describe illness caused by changes in weather or by eating certain foods, such as flaxseed and butter, especially when consumed in the sun. When someone is struck by Mich, they may experience symptoms such as chills or severe headaches. Additionally, if someone suffers from inflamed sores or blisters on their lips or mouth due to sunburn, this is also referred to as Mich.

A common home remedy for Mich involves drinking Damakese juice mixed with coffee. Sometimes, there is also a ritual performed by the person who prepares the coffee. During this ritual, the Damakese juice is squeezed by hand into the coffee cup. After drinking the coffee, the server—often a girl—keeps the residue from the Damakese leaves. She then holds the residue in her right hand and comes to the patient's bed or seat. She rotates her hand over the head three times before taking the residue outside and disposing of it. It is believed that this ritual helps enhance the healing process by removing the bad omen

associated with the illness.

In some regions of the country, it is also believed that conditions like blindness and skin discoloration (known as Lemtse) can result from being struck by Mich.

Coming back to Kawase's Gedamu, "I heard from his cousin how Gedmu lost his vision: 'After a long drought, it rained, steam rose from the earth and Gedamu was blinded by mich' Mich is Amharic for disease caused by the sun. The common treatment is to drink medicinal tea made of plants such as Haragressa and Damakese."

Attu is one of his subjects in the spirit of piazza, which has been described cleverly. Attu's story is so captivating and unforgettable that it would remain in the minds of the readership for a long time if not forever.

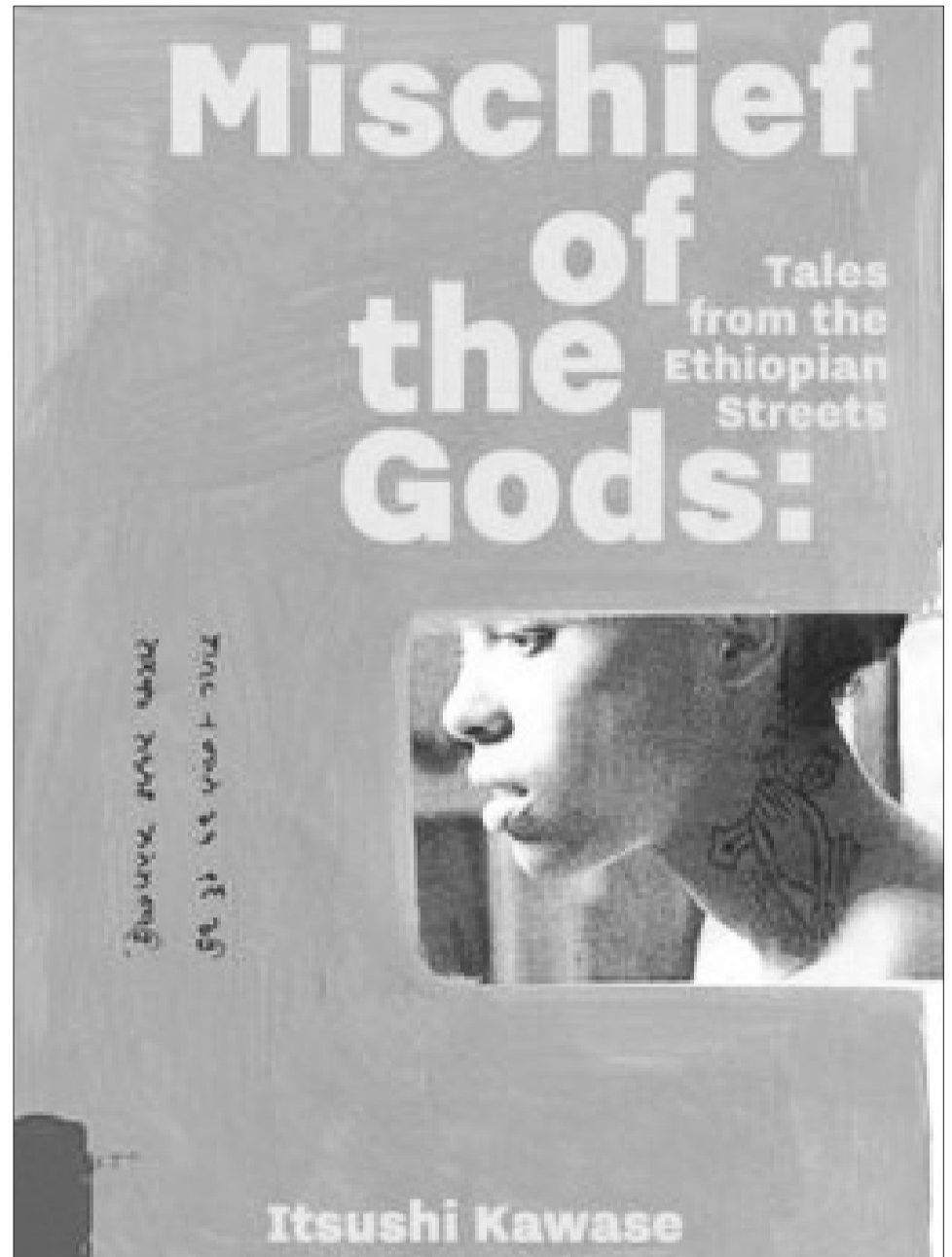
"A woman known as Attu is a renowned character among the spirits of Piazza; she might best be called 'Queen'. Her outlandish personality makes her stand out among the many spirits in and around the piazza. Prematurely aged Attu is also a deaf. She makes a living out of her movements: she stoops, lumbers in, and forcefully grabs the arms of passersby, revealing one of her drooping, wrinkled breasts and pantomimes breastfeeding a baby. She badgers people for money, making the claim that she has a baby to feed."

Kawase details Attu's everyday hustle dramatically. Residents of Gondar and other spirits of piazza know that Attu is faking it and she is a subject of ridicule as the urchins are mimicking her moves driving Attu crazy and leaving her crying loudly throwing stones/rocks at them and cursing the brats every day. However, Attu knows how to survive through her deceptive but naïve gesture until she disappears from the streets of Piazza. Reading her story and developing some sort of attachment to Attu, the readership would feel bad and get anxious as to what could have happened to her until Kawase found out that she was finally placed in a welfare facility that provides shelter and protection to disabled people.

The most interesting part of Attu's story is what she did to the writer when he went to visit her at the facility with flowers in his hands. Attu has changed a lot to a better look, charm and odor. What her odor has been described as Atella /Residue of the traditional alcoholic beverage Tella/ when she was in the street is no more present and her outfit, hairstyle and general wellbeing was amazing.

"I offered her the flowers and she went to take them but hesitated looking confused and looking as if she didn't know what the gesture was or meant. I gave her my blessing, said goodbye, and I was about to leave when she threw the flowers on the ground and grabbed me by the arm. Then she suddenly revealed one of her breasts and made a pose asking me for money. A great sense of relief spread over me."

"In 'You the Sun's Lullaby,' the author highlights the plight of street children in the town, labeling them as 'Borko' or 'dirty pig,' 'Duriye' or 'rouge,' 'ruffian,' 'Godanna



Tedadari' or 'child on the roadside,' 'Berenda Lijoch' or 'children under eaves,' and 'Adegegna Bozene' or 'probable dangerous criminals'. Kawase seeks to understand and document why these children end up on the streets. Some survive by vending, shoe shining, tour guiding, or running errands for Gondar's residents. However, many remain homeless and marginalized.

One compelling story involves a boy trained as a pickpocket who, despite mastering his craft, experiences remorse after stealing from a woman. He returns the money, keeping only what he spent with excitement and consumed with guilt. Another notable character is Kangaroo, who despite his own homelessness builds a shelter for a stray kitten. Kawase empathizes with these children, delving into their psychological backgrounds, attributing their innate goodness, compassion, and repentance to their religious upbringing.

Mulu's Snakes brings forth the tragic tale of Mulu, a beggar from the streets of Piazza. Like many street children, she frequents Kawase's hotel room, where he welcomes everyone as a wise researcher. For Kawase, breathing life and understanding into his research requires embracing the human element.

"Mulu stands apart with her divinely pure demeanor among the street children and adults of Gondar. Upon entering Kawase's room, she greets her host politely, then sits and picks up a pen to draw dots that eventually form into snakes. Her stories evoke memories

from the writer's childhood village.

Reflecting on his encounter with snakes as a child, Kawase recounts, 'One day while playing in the river with friends, I spotted a pit viper coiled at the water's edge. Foolishly motivated to show off, I seized it easily. In a moment of pride, a sharp numbness shot through the first joint of my right index finger.' Unfortunately, Kawase fell ill and barely survived a near-death experience due to the snakebite, leaving his right index finger permanently bent.

The writer's childhood adventure intertwined with Mulu's story of snakes underscores the story's essence. It poignantly reflects how serpents have appeared throughout the writer's life.

As a character, Mulu meets a tragic end in a car accident—a heartrending conclusion to the tale of this innocent woman."

Another vibrant character that Kawase introduces through his engaging encounters is China, the egg vendor. China got her name because of her small eyes which is a common nickname to boys/girls with small eyes. China has a traditional tattoo on her face in Amharic "Bale Nikkesat", "Nikkise", «Nikiseko» is a common name for village girls with tattoos on their faces. The author skillfully portrays the traditional method of tattooing, although the ingredients, tools, and techniques vary by region. According to Kawase's experience, "The raw material for tattoo ink is soot from burning tires. This soot is dissolved in water and mixed with a liquid extracted from plant leaves to create a black ink-like substance.



# Indepth

## The Seoul Smart City Award 2024- for spectacular achievement

BY WONDWOSSEN ALEMAYEHU

Addis Ababa has entertained 32 mayors since the establishment of its mayoral office in 1910. All the mayors down the line have done their own respective contribution to the development of the city. Apparently, they were commended for the legacy they left behind for the common good of their people.

The incumbent Mayor of Addis Ababa, Mrs. Adanech Abiebie, is notably known for launching various city development projects alongside with their spectacular timely accomplishments. The construction of infrastructure, facilities and the recent phenomenal corridor development projects are some of the ample projects the mayor is in charge to steadfastly oversee until their final stage.

The mayor is unequivocally known for the robust, passionate and resilient leadership in almost every project underway in the city. The relentless and rigorous leadership sighted in the mayor is undoubtedly exemplary for all levels of management in every sector.

The Seoul Smart City Award 2024 is one of the tangible global testimonies outspokenly reflecting the mayor's outstanding achievement on leadership. The award achieved by the city administration is apparently reflective of the persistent commitment exerted for the remarkable completion of the undertakings in all corners of the city.

The best leadership award earned by our city's mayor is indicative of the dedication, creativity and having meticulous attention to details throughout the project's development. The innovative solutions on the implementation and the ability to manage complex challenges are progressively contributing to the successful completion of the projects.

Addis Ababa is showing drastic change for the better future of its inhabitants. It is striving to cope with the ever-growing economic and technological facets of the world. Robust and strong leadership is primarily attributable to the successful completion of the projects. The outstanding sense of leadership that emanates from the government takes the lion's share in effectuating the development projects in a timely and fabulous manner.

The launching of the second phase of the development project is an apparent showcase for the effective move of the project as per its timeline. The project's resilient aim to bring about conducive environment for its inhabitants is a collective effort of all the stakeholders in the city.

Addis Ababa as part of being home for myriads of international institutions including the African union, the



**The project in progress with strong leadership of the mayor for the advancement of all sectors in the city entails audacious hope to bring better provision for the society and the global community**

administration is progressing the projects with vigorous energy making the infrastructure in line with the technological advancement in the 21st century.

The strong cooperation between various stakeholders is significantly contributing for the steady move and timely completion of the projects in the capital. The mayor's sense of strong and innovative leadership on the projects is giving the city more motivation for change and other parts of the country as well.

The resident's preparation for change and the government's take of vibrant leadership for successful completion of the projects are the complementary scenarios for the effective and productive outcome on the grand development project in the city.

The vehement strive to bring about visible change on the housing conditions and infrastructure of the city would ultimately give the capital improved standard and better living style that would be equivalent to the best cities in the world making use of up-to-date technological standards.

The project is keen at improving the transportation system ensuring sustainable economic development of the capital. The improvement on the part of the transportation will ensure all citizens

experience safe and efficient systems drifting further growth on businesses and increasing job opportunities.

In line with the infrastructure, the move to advance the city with digital ICT infrastructure is the other move for social and economic progress of the capital. The expansion of the city with digital technology would play a vital role in facilitating effective trade and boosting productivity.

The corridor project will have an overall spectacular influence in improving the health, and education sector capitalizing on the quality of life. As part of the human development project, ensuring quality education for citizens which will help improve unemployment rate and ensuring economic growth.

In conclusion, the project in progress with strong leadership of the mayor for the advancement of all sectors in the city entails audacious hope to bring better provision for the society and the global community.

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# Law & Politics

## Why it is the time for Ethiopia to join the COMESA Free Trade Area (COMESA FTA)

BY AMB. MARKOS TEKLE (Ph.D.)

Ethiopia, a vital member of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), has hesitated to join the COMESA Free Trade Area (FTA) since its inception in 1994. This caution stemmed from concerns about potential dominance by more economically advanced member states such as Egypt and Zimbabwe, particularly when Ethiopia was recovering from civil conflict and had limited industrial capacity. However, Ethiopia's economic landscape has undergone significant transformation in recent years, marked by remarkable progress in industrial development, liberalization of the financial sector, and the implementation of regional economic integration policies. This analysis contends that the present juncture presents an ideal opportunity for Ethiopia to become a part of the COMESA FTA, particularly given its alignment with broader regional and continental trade initiatives, including the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), the Intergovernmental Authority on Development's (IGAD) Minimum Integration Plan, and the African Union's Agenda 2063. Ethiopia's recent economic reforms and burgeoning industrial prowess underscore the benefits and necessity of participating in the FTA.

### A changing landscape: From protectionism to regional integration

In the 1990s, Ethiopia emerged from civil war and encountered challenges in industrialization and economic growth (Degefa, 2001). At that time, participation in a free trade area like the COMESA FTA was viewed as a potential threat to Ethiopia's emerging industries. The apprehension of facing regional competition from more established economies prompted policymakers to adopt a protective stance, prioritizing the development of local industries before opening up to international trade. The national market's current status contrasts with substantial economic progress. Ethiopia has emerged as a leader in the textile and advancement industry. Digitalization has taken root, and the government has implemented meaningful economic reforms. These changes and regional integration efforts by COMESA, AfCFTA, and IGAD present a unique opportunity for Ethiopia to strengthen its position on the COMESA FTA.

### Reconsider improved industrial landscape and opening economy

#### Growing textile and apparel industry

Ethiopia's textile and apparel sector has seen remarkable growth, with an average annual export increase of over 50% in the last decade, positioning it as one of the country's leading sectors (EIC, 2020). This growth has been driven by establishing industrial parks such as the Hawassa Industrial Park, attracting substantial

foreign direct investment and contributing to thousands of jobs. Ethiopia's textile industry is now well-placed to compete regionally and globally, benefiting from labor and manufacturing efficiency cost advantages. To further enhance their competitiveness, joining the COMESA Free Trade Agreement would enable Ethiopia's textiles and apparel products to access regional markets duty-free. Currently, Ethiopia faces tariffs of over 30% when exporting to COMESA countries, putting its exporters at a significant disadvantage compared to FTA member countries enjoying duty-free access (COMESA 2019). Participation in the FTA would unlock substantial trade opportunities for Ethiopia, enabling its products to compete more effectively in markets such as Kenya, Uganda, and Sudan.

### Economic reforms and opening the financial sector

Ethiopia's recent financial sector liberalization is in line with the goal of promoting regional trade. The Ethiopian government has started allowing foreign investment in banking, insurance, and telecommunications sectors. These reforms aim to stimulate private sector growth, improve financial inclusion and attract foreign direct investment (FDI) (World Bank 2020). By joining the COMESA FTA, Ethiopia can complement these reforms by strengthening regional economic relationships and promoting cross-border investment, thus accelerating the development of its growing private sector. Moreover, the liberalization of the financial sector can facilitate trade by enhancing access to financial services for businesses involved in regional commerce. Efficient financial transactions across borders are essential for exporters and importers, and the liberalization of Ethiopia's financial market will further improve trade efficiency

### Alignment with AfCFTA, IGAD, and Agenda 2063

#### AfCFTA and regional trade synergies

The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) aims to establish the largest free trade area globally, covering 55 countries and a market of over 1.2 billion people. Suppose Ethiopia joins the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa Free Trade Area (COMESA FTA). In that case, it will harmonize its trade policies with AfCFTA's broader objectives, thus contributing to the overarching goal of increasing intra-African trade by more than 50% in the coming years (Tralac, 2020). This step would strategically position Ethiopia to leverage AfCFTA's objective of eliminating tariffs on 90% of goods, thereby promoting a unified market for goods and services across the continent. In addition, membership in the COMESA FTA would allow Ethiopia to practice regional economic integration on a smaller scale, thereby easing its transition

into the larger AfCFTA framework. The benefits of increased regional trade under COMESA would help Ethiopia capitalize on more extensive market access, enabling it to prepare for more extensive continental trade competition

### IGAD's minimum integration plan

As a member of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), Ethiopia is already actively participating in regional economic cooperation efforts focused on peace, security, and development. IGAD's Minimum Integration Plan encourages member states to synchronize trade policies, promote regional economic integration, and enhance infrastructure development. By becoming a part of the COMESA FTA, Ethiopia would be taking a practical step towards aligning with IGAD's broader objectives of regional integration and economic growth (IGAD 2017). Harmonizing trade policies within COMESA and IGAD would make it easier for Ethiopian exporters to access East and Southern Africa markets. It would also enhance cross-border cooperation in infrastructure development, which is vital for trade facilitation.

### AU Agenda 2063 and continental development

The African Union's Agenda 2063 envisions an integrated, prosperous, and peaceful Africa, driven by its citizens and representing a dynamic force in the global arena. Key pillars of this agenda include economic integration, the development of a single continental market, and the promotion of industrialization and innovation. Ethiopia's joining of the COMESA FTA aligns directly with Agenda 2063's aspiration for deeper trade ties among African nations (African Union, 2015). By participating in the FTA, Ethiopia would bolster its own economic growth and contribute to the broader goal of continental unity and economic prosperity.

### The strategic benefits of joining COMESA FTA

#### Reducing tariffs and enhancing export competitiveness

One of the most significant advantages of joining the COMESA FTA is the elimination of tariffs on intra-regional trade. This change would drastically reduce the cost of Ethiopian exports to other COMESA member countries, making products such as textiles, coffee, leather goods, and agricultural produce more competitive. The textile industry, in particular, benefits greatly, as duty free access would open up markets across the COMESA region.

#### Accessing a growing regional market and promoting economic diversification

The COMESA region has over 560 million consumers and a combined GDP of over \$769 billion (COMESA 2021). By joining

the FTA, Ethiopia would unlock access to this vast market, enabling it to diversify its export base and reduce dependence on traditional trade partners like the European Union and the United States. The burgeoning demand within COMESA member states for consumer goods, industrial products, and services provides an excellent opportunity for Ethiopian industries to expand and thrive.

### Fostering regional value chains and economic growth

By participating in the FTA, Ethiopia can contribute to and benefit from the development of regional value chains. Given Ethiopia's comparative advantage in labor-intensive manufacturing and agriculture, it can integrate its production processes with those of other COMESA members, fostering mutual economic growth. For instance, Ethiopian leather products could be further processed within COMESA countries before being exported to global markets, creating a win-win for regional economic cooperation

### Encouraging private sector growth and job creation

As Ethiopia continues to open up its economy, joining the COMESA FTA would significantly boost the private sector by encouraging exports and regional business partnerships. The textile and apparel sector alone has created over 100,000 jobs in recent years, and duty-free access to COMESA markets would lead to further expansion and job creation (EIC, 2020). This is in line with the Ethiopian government's broader goals of enhancing industrialization, creating employment opportunities, and promoting sustainable economic growth.

To sum up, the time has come for Ethiopia to integrate fully into the COMESA Free Trade Area. The country's economic transformation, the liberalization of its financial sector, and its alignment with broader regional and continental trade initiatives make participation in the FTA advantageous and necessary. By joining the COMESA FTA, Ethiopia would reduce export costs, gain access to a vast regional market, foster economic growth and diversification, and contribute to achieving continental trade and development goals under AfCFTA, IGAD, and Agenda 2063. The potential benefits for Ethiopia's industries, private sector, and broader economy far outweigh the challenges, making it imperative for the country to embrace regional economic integration through the COMESA FTA.

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*He is a trainer and foreign policy researcher. He can be reached at markostekle@gmail.com*



# Women in Focus



Photo: Hadush Abraha

## Sumptuous months of Gamo married women: *Sophie Dubusha*

BY MEKDES TAYE (PhD)

Marriage in the rural areas of Ethiopia had its own unique style and approach across areas. Though there are some similarities in its basic necessities, the application is quite different. As per the cultures of the given nation, dancing, singing, serving delicious and excessive foods in the ceremonies is almost the same across cultures. After the marriage has been done before the masses, there is a special cultural setting portrayed in the Gamo zone.

In Gamo culture, marriage can be done in two ways. The first one is the man could choose a woman and sends elders to her family for marriage proposals. The family of the woman could not say okay with the first, second and even third trial. The elders said, "With the two arrivals the family of the woman did show a sign that signals their willingness. For example at the elders' third time arrival the family could invite them to sit and have something to eat. Then the elders understand that they are in a way to agree. After some more visits they express their inclination. The wedding day will be fixed and preparations could start ahead.

The other type of marriage in the area is made with the alertness of the woman to be abducted by her lover or without her consent that is done by force full one. If the couples agreed to live together in marriage then they agree and arrange for the abduction to be made by the man and his friends. In such situations the family and the tribe of the woman are expected to let her free with every possibility. Otherwise they are going to be inferred as weak and powerless in the eyes of

the people around them. Thus they did everything to bring back the woman. The move to it is going to be accepted if they are able to find her before she sleeps with the man. But if she already did it, they will not attempt to bring her. The next step the man could follow is he could send elders to her family. Whether the family likes it or not, if she has already gone there, the marriage is arranged.

In Gamo Zone, most of the time marriage which could be either the above mentioned ones is made preferably since April. This is deliberately done to make it hot at *Meskel* holiday. As the contacted elders said the newly married couples are going to be recognized and get approval of the community when they are taken out to the meeting place called *Dubusha*.

In the culture of Gamo, when the woman gets married, she is taken into the house of the man's family. There she is going to be adored, cared for and kept well by the family of the man. She is not expected and allowed to work in the kitchen. She simply cared sitting in bed. The mother and sisters of the groom are going to be responsible for the bride. As per the words of the elders and scholars in the culture, the mother of the groom especially is not expected to see the bride while she is eating food. She only prepares delicious foods and serves them without noticing the bride back. This care is going to be done till the program is called *Sophie*.

Since the well-kept bride is easily identified by the grace, beauty and weight of her body, the families of the men who are responsible for caring for the women as a bride in their home are going to compete

on the day. That means if the bride had good weight and beauty it is believed that the woman is cared for well by this family. Thus the praise and respect of this woman did mean the same to the family of her husband. This approval is made on the 16<sup>th</sup> day of September at *Dubusha*. This beauty and care contest is called *Sophie*. That is the family that was keeping this woman is going to be thanked and respected by the community that is going to be gathered at the *Sophie* program.

Kawo Tadesse especially told *The Ethiopian Herald* that one of the most interesting cultures that decorated the *Damera* bonfire lighting program is *Sophie*.

New couples who get married in the year are displayed at the *Dubusha*. When the couples get out from their house, there is a cultural dressing style. Since they are going to be judged in the eyes of thousands, they wear the most valued cultural dress and *Buluko*, a woven cultural garment made on the dress. The women added a cultural skin as a coat. They beautify themselves with various attractive and precious ornaments. They decor their neck with *Chele* (beads) and necklaces. Very unique and attractive cultural brochettes are also used to make the women very pretty. Regarding their hair there is a very special culture here. The women are getting to swab with the high amount of butter on their head. The amount is going to be very high to show the woman was kept very well and the families that have been taking care of her are very wealthy and generous.

This program will be celebrated following the oxen slaughtering program that was done at *Dorzie*. The *Derles* or specific

administrative tribes or culturally assigned regions of each *Deres* orchestrate *Sophie* at their *Dubusha*.

Since the time is already known by the community, everyone in the area gather to select the well-cared woman from the collected ones. For this program, newcomers from different areas including Addis Ababa and even tourists gather to watch all the practices. Couples stepped up on the lofted area at the *Dubusha*. On top of their hair the women leveled a higher amount of better which was circled by the leaf of the ostrich. The recognition and competition of these girls is also made by the amount of the leaf they put on their head. They simply stand in front of the gathering. The people start critically examining them with their thing and body appearance.

The one who had a higher amount of butter and many ostrich leaves on her head is going to pass one requirement. But the whole couples that are ousted over there are going to be recognized as married on that day though they get married some months earlier than the program. It is only at this setting that they get publicly recognized by the community. Then the winner of this competition is going to get the blessings and adoration of the elders. The family that took care of her is also mentioned as the best family in the community.

Kawo Megersa had replied that if the couples already had a baby, they are not expected to come to *Sophie*. They are already recognized. That is why to bring them to this event; couples are expected to get married in April; so that they could not give birth till *Meskel*.



# Society

## Higher education with a purpose: Arba Minch University's commitment to community service

BY MEKDES TAYE (PHD)

(Part 2)

In a previous article, *The Ethiopian Herald* evaluated Arba Minch University's effectiveness in serving the community beyond its primary role of providing quality education. To gain deeper insights, EH spoke with the university president about the institution's ongoing initiatives focusing on the University's engagement in the community. In this article, the newspaper turns its attention to Associate Professor Behailu Merdekiows, the Vice President for Research and Community Service, who enthusiastically shared the university's commitments to community service.

According to Behailu, Arba Minch University, like other higher education institutions, focuses on three key responsibilities: delivering quality education, conducting impactful research, and engaging in community service. Under his leadership in the research section, the university has established a platform known as "Community Joint Cooperation," which includes a dedicated university-industry interaction research team.

He stressed that the research that has been conducted in the university is going to be supported and encouraged if they focus on synthesizing and scientifically examining the issues of the people around them and if they are attempting to contribute to the country's developmental policy. He said that the given research in the institute is supposed to invite the interaction of the community since it is aimed at addressing the problems of the community themselves. The logic behind this is that the community should participate in the research process and equally look for solutions. Though some solutions needed scientific way outs, the community should also contribute its indigenous knowledge and cooperate with the study so as to hold the finding as their own. Thus, at a research dissemination workshop, the university invited community representatives who are the subjects in the study.

As per the result of the study, if the finding required the integration of the community with the founded-out theme like agriculture, mining, tourism, or an ICT-related issue, it is moved to the community cooperation wing and the wing activates the community as per the study. If the finding is about technological outreach work, then this result is taken to the university industry cooperation wing. If the case needs technological invention, then the prototype is taken into the community for its checkup. If the result is taken into the community wing, the adaptation to the finding is made practically in front of the community.

Behailu had raised the productive and fruitful research that was made on *Enset*. Since 10 years ago under this plant lots of research has been done, and technologically



Associate Professor Behailu Merdekiows

advanced solutions have been implemented in the community. *Enset* in the community is the most loved and respected food. It is rich in minerals. It has the tendency to resist desert conditions, which is gratitude in the society as the most valuable food.

The process of *Enset* in the community is left out to women and girls to be taken care of. Thus it has been them who tirelessly process the plant till served on the table. Behailu reminded that though the food has been under use since almost 100 years, there has been no research and technology that attempts to decipher the burden of the females and the betterment of the food itself. Women have been effortlessly working on it by scrubbing, squeezing and making ready to be served which had been a very tough process for years. The technology that recognizes this challenge and confides in solving it is one significant concern the research team is exceedingly eager on. Besides the women's burden, in the process of making this plant into food, the steps and procedures did force it to lose from 25 to 35 % of its amount. The cause of this loss is the cultural process that is meant for fermentation. More than the quantity lost; the process takes a month and/or a month and half. Thus to minimize the fermentation duration and secure its quantity, a scientific and coordinated study has been conducted and a finding that eradicated the mentioned troubles has been applied by the university.

As per the finding, Behailu said, the technology that shifted the 30 to 45 days of fermentation to seven days is confirmed and applied. Scientifically the needed yeast that is required for the plant fermentation is fabricated so that the time taken for the process is made shorter and simple. This technology was taken into the community and got a huge acceptance. In addition the scholars and the responsible bodies

scientifically. In this grinding hall it is women who take care of the process. Men are there to sculpt the heaviest part of the plant and transport the amount".

Professor further explained that "the British Christian Aid Organization had asked us to skill and stem the gridding house at Wolayita Sodo. Thus youths formed a union and processed the plant and made powder of it. They are making business by packing its powder to be sold away from their place. Other equivalent institutions also requested the university to have the machine. He said, "We sent a complete machine of this kind to Bonga University and they are working on it effectively. Currently we are disseminating about 100 *Enset* processing technology to Sidama, Mizan, Dawuro and many more areas of the south west parts of the country." Since the plant processing culture was taking place in the ground by making deep holes, the newly invented technology had changed this to a pot which is culturally made using mud. Thus science has created job opportunities for those people who made this pot.

Regarding water resources that are surrounding the institute, the university is examining the potential of waterfalls in the area. Thus he said "scientists that are concerned with renewable power research had made a study on the amount and nature of water resources. Thus at Kemba Woreda at Dingamo Kebele, there is a waterfall that has the same amount throughout the year. The scientists studied that the water had the potential to generate around 10 kva. Thus, if it could be dammed, it had the capacity to give light for about 400 adults in the area. Thus with this study finding we are in a way to apply it using the aid we get from the Christian Aid. We are completing the construction process and we planted electric poles. We are going to test the function soon."

The university also invented the natural fertilizer machine. This machine did shorten the three and more month's fermentation rate for compost fertilizer to only some days. Thus the community is using this technology effectively.

Since Gamo zone is one of the tourist attractive areas of the country, the university had gathered relevant information about the areas to be visited and resting rooms for tourists and uploaded it on web sites for simplifying the process.

Regarding culture, the vice president said that the university is tightly working with the zone's Culture and Tourism Department to enable the culture of *Dubusha* to be registered at UNESCO. Moreover, the institute is hardly working on preserving the dying languages and identities of peoples in the region. Generally, Arba Minch University is the shining institute that tangibly assists the national plan of growth and transformation. Thus, institutions could have a lot to imitate from it.

**The given research in the institute is supposed to invite the interaction of the community since it is aimed at addressing the problems of the community themselves**

from governmental bodies and ministers from Ministry of Technology, Ethiopian confirmative Assessment, Ministry of Agriculture, and House of Peoples Representative had seen the technology and validated and approved it with higher admiration.

In the Ethiopian Intellectual Property Authority the university had registered five innovations. The scientific research that was made on the plant had delivered technology and that technology had solved the community problem at hand. The vice president said that "We built *Enset* grinder at Dorzie village that processes the plant



# International News

## Global conflicts driving up to 21,000 deaths daily from hunger: Oxfam

*Most food crises are 'largely manufactured', charity says in new report published on World Food Day.*

Hunger caused by conflicts around the world has reached record high levels, a new report by Oxfam has found, which accuses warring parties of weaponising food and blocking aid.

Between 7,000 to as many as 21,000 people are likely dying each day from hunger in countries affected by conflict, according to the report, published by the United Kingdom-based charity on World Food Day on Wednesday.

Titled Food Wars, it examined 54 countries experiencing conflict, revealing that they account for nearly all of the 281.6 million people facing acute hunger today. Conflict has also been a major driver of forced displacement in these countries, which has now reached a record 117 million people.

Oxfam emphasised that conflict not only fuels hunger, but that warring parties are actively using food as a weapon by targeting food, water and energy infrastructure, as well as blocking food aid.

In September, three humanitarian agencies warned of "a starvation crisis of historic proportions" amid Sudan's civil war, while the proportion of households affected by high levels of acute food insecurity in Gaza has been the largest ever recorded globally since the end of



*Palestinians receive food donated by a charity, in Khan Younis in the southern Gaza Strip [File: Haitham Imdad/EPA-EFE]*

last year.

"As conflict rages around the world, starvation has become a lethal weapon wielded by warring parties against international laws," said Oxfam's Emily Farr, who works in the area of food and economic security.

"Today's food crises are largely manufactured. Nearly half a million people in Gaza – where 83 percent of needed food aid is currently not reaching them – and over three-quarters of a million in Sudan are starving as the devastating

effects of wars on food are likely to persist for generations."

The analysis revealed that the crises of war, displacement and hunger occur in countries heavily reliant on primary product exports. For instance, 95 percent of Sudan's export earnings come from gold and livestock. Mining operations have led to violent conflicts, forcing people from their homes as the degraded and polluted environments become unliveable.

According to Oxfam, this underscores the failures

of peace-building efforts that rely on an economic liberalisation model focused on attracting foreign investment and promoting export-driven economies, which often exacerbates inequality instead.

"Large-scale private investment – both foreign and domestic – has often exacerbated political and economic instability, as investors seize control over land and water, displacing local populations," Farr said.

Conflict frequently intensifies other crises like climate shocks, economic instability and inequality. Climate-related disasters such as droughts and floods, combined with rising global food prices due to pandemic shutdowns and disruptions from the Russia-Ukraine war, have escalated hunger crises in East and Southern Africa, it said.

Oxfam warned that the global commitment to "zero hunger" by 2030 is becoming increasingly unattainable. It called on the international community, including the United Nations Security Council, to hold accountable those responsible for "starvation crimes" under international law.

"To break the vicious cycle of food insecurity and conflict, global leaders must confront the root causes of conflict: colonial legacies, injustices, human rights abuses and inequalities – rather than offering superficial solutions," Farr said.

SOURCE: AL JAZEERA

## A Staggering 2.0 Billion Women Live in Poverty With No Access to Social Protection

The growing gender gap between men and women is reflected not only in the world's highest political hierarchies but also in the daily social and economic lives—with most women fighting a losing battle against poverty.

The latest flagship report from UN Women reveals a widening gender gap in social protection — the raft of policies, including cash benefits, unemployment protection, pensions and healthcare – which leaves women and girls more vulnerable to poverty. Released ahead of the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty on October 17, the report shows that a staggering two billion women and girls are without access to any form of social protection.

While levels of social protection have increased since 2015, gender gaps in such coverage have widened in most developing regions, suggesting that the recent gains have benefited men more than women.

In a world of turmoil, the report calls on governments to provide women and girls with sustainable pathways out of poverty, by prioritizing the needs of women and girls in their social protection measures and crisis responses.

Sandra Ramirez, a Legal and Advocacy Advisor at Equality Now, told IPS women around the world continue to be denied their economic rights— and their economic participation is hindered by a range of sex-discriminatory laws, including those that govern labor and prevent women from having equal access to property ownership,

inheritance, and retirement rights.

In numerous countries, she pointed out, women face barriers to accessing credit and bank accounts and are barred from certain professions. Financial inequality prevents many women from accruing wealth, attaining economic stability, and investing in essentials such as housing, healthcare, and retirement.

"Legal and social restrictions on women's access to education and economic participation limit their earning potential, widen the gender pay gap, and curtail their decision-making power. This combines to keep women disproportionately represented in low-wage, insecure, and unregulated jobs, with limited access to career advancement opportunities," she said.

UN Women's new report highlights how globally, in 2023, just 36.4% of women with newborns were covered by maternity benefits. Without adequate paid maternity leave, new mothers are often forced to return to work shortly after childbirth, potentially jeopardizing their physical and mental health as they juggle the demands of childcare and work.

The lack of paid paternity leave in many countries perpetuates traditional gender roles, placing the burden of caregiving on women and forcing mothers to choose between their careers and family responsibilities.

The unequal distribution of unpaid care work and the undervaluation of women's unpaid care and domestic labor compounds the obstacles women face, said Ramirez, who is

based in Colombia.

Ben Phillips, author of 'How to Fight Inequality' and a former advisor to governments on social policy, told IPS the numbers revealed in UN Women's powerful new report should shock policymakers into action.

"The widening chasm in social protection is pushing millions into misery, driving deprivation across generations, holding back growth, and undermining the social contract. The data in this report expose no mere set of unfortunate policy mistakes but instead structural, systemic and spiraling inequality that is the backdrop for a moment in which development, prosperity and stability are all in danger".

The cause for hope, he pointed out, is that there are policy solutions proven to work. The challenge, however, is to overcome elite political obstruction to any equalizing policy proposals. The only safe approach for the world now is for leaders to be bold, and for citizens to organise to ensure that they are," he declared.

Meanwhile, the report shows the dismal state of maternity protection across the globe. Despite advancements, more than 63 per cent of women worldwide still give birth without access to maternity benefits, with the figure soaring to 94 per cent in sub-Saharan Africa.

The lack of financial support during maternity leave not only places women at an economic disadvantage, it also compromises their health and well-being and that of their children, perpetuating poverty across generations.

The report also paints a stark picture of the gendered nature of poverty. Women and girls are overrepresented among the poor at every stage of life, with the largest gaps during their childbearing years. Women aged 25-34 are 25 per cent more likely to live in extremely poor households than men in the same age group.

Conflict and climate change exacerbate this inequality. Women in fragile contexts are 7.7 times more likely to live in extreme poverty compared to those in non-fragile environments.

Gender-specific risks and vulnerabilities are often neglected in the aftermath of shocks. For example, very high rates of inflation since 2022, which have led to spiraling food and energy prices, hit women particularly hard.

Yet, out of nearly 1,000 social protection measures adopted by governments across 171 countries in the months that followed, only 18 per cent targeted women's economic security.

Ramirez of Equality Now said the gender gap in social protection leaves women bearing the brunt of economic instability and undermines their ability to recover and thrive. Climate change and conflicts around the world are deepening economic inequality for women, as resources are diverted away from social protections that they desperately need.

With two billion women and girls lacking access to basic social safety nets, they are being pushed further into poverty, particularly in regions devastated by environmental disasters, war, and unrest.





## Published Weekly in Collaboration with Haramaya University

### HU wins IGGAs a pool of 95 exceptional projects representing 28 countries

- Ethiopia among fourteen nations with exceptional sustainability efforts

BY DIRRIBA TESHOME

Haramaya University (HU) project wins a prestigious International Green Gown Awards (IGGAs) 2024 for its exceptional commitment to sustainability and innovative environmental stewardship.

HU Vice President for Research and Community Engagement, Yisihak Yusuf (PhD), publicized that the university was selected from a pool of 95 exceptional projects representing 28 countries. This recognition places Ethiopia among 14 nations recognized for their exceptional sustainability efforts.

HU's award-winning project, titled "Reviving Haramaya: Sustaining Lake and Catchment for Sustainable Communities and Ecosystems in Eastern Ethiopia," highlights the university's efforts to restore Lake Haramaya and its surrounding ecosystem. "The Office of Integrated Haramaya Lake Water-shade Development and Dr. Arcayasellassie Abebe need appreciation for their compiling information that was submitted to International Green Gown Award Committee."

The award is a testament to HU's unwavering commitment to fostering a sustainable campus and contributing to a greener future. It underscores the university's dedication



Yisihak Yusuf (PhD)

to environmental responsibility, research excellence, and innovative teaching practices, he noted.

In a press released on Friday, The Environmental Association for Universities and Colleges (EAUC), the leading body for sustainability in the post-16 education sector in the UK and Republic of Ireland, has announced the winners of the 2024 International Green Gown Awards in association with Allianz Global Investors, one of the world's leading active investment managers.

Head of Impact Strategy at Allianz Global Investors Diane Mak, said: "Congratulations to all the winners! It has not been an easy task for the judges to select the winners among the 95 exceptional projects coming from 28 countries.

Being part of the judging panel myself, I got to see the many sustainability initiatives the finalists are championing at their institutions. The level of leadership, innovation, drive and commitment demonstrated is truly outstanding. Winning the Awards is a wonderful achievement, and we wish the winners and all participants the very best in continuing their journey in making a difference for the future and in promoting good practices for sustainability within, and beyond, campuses."

Likewise, Charlotte Bonner, Chief Executive of EAUC who delivers the awards, said: "It's a privilege to celebrate the remarkable achievements of this year's International Green Gown Awards winners. This year we have 28 winners from 14 countries. These are setting powerful examples for how to embed sustainability into every aspect of education and community.

Their winning submissions highlight the breadth of innovative and impactful sustainability work taking place across the globe and serve as powerful catalysts for further sustainability action. By sharing these stories and examples widely, we can inspire more institutions to follow their lead, amplifying the impact beyond their campuses.

The commitment to driving positive change, not only on their own campuses but beyond, is a testament to the leadership and vision that will

shape a sustainable future. Congratulations to all our winners and participants!"

Among the 28 awards which have been made this year, with recipients coming from 14 countries, Ethiopia's Haramaya University- of course the only African University- has won Nature Positive as a large organization competing with the Highly Commended - Durham University-UK and University of St. Joseph, Macao SAR China while Collegio Borromeo-Italy has won among small organizations. The announcements were made live on social media between 7 and 11 October as part of Winners' Week.

As sustainability becomes increasingly important, these awards have gained recognition as the most prestigious accolades in the higher education sector.

Endorsed by the United Nations Environment Program since 2004 and supported by The Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU), L'Agence universitaire de la Francophonie (AUF), the International Association of Universities (IAU), the Higher Education Sustainability Initiative (HESI) and Australasian Campuses Towards Sustainability (ACTS), the IGGAs recognize and celebrate the exceptional sustainability initiatives being undertaken by universities and colleges across the world.



## Published Weekly in Cooperation with Dambi Dollo University

### DaDU teaching hospital healthcare services

Dambi Dollo University (DaDU) Teaching Hospital was known as the General Hospital before it was upgraded to teaching hospital. Since 2013, when its administration has been run by the university, it has been known as teaching hospital.

Starting from overtake of the hospital, DaDU has made various improvements in various aspects. It focused on technology-enabled healthcare equipment, recruitment of health professionals specialized in various disciplines, and establishing a Model Pharmacy for quality services to the community. The hospital is currently providing 24-hour services to inpatients and outpatients in a quality manner.

The University's Teaching Hospital has established a mini blood bank to prevent maternal and child mortality, said Asst. Prof Mitiku Bajiro, the hospital's Chief



Delivery service

Executive Director.

He stated that the mini blood bank, which has contributed to reducing maternal and child mortality rates. This initiative necessitates a comprehensive strategy that includes ensuring access to quality healthcare.

It is essential that all women and children



Treating accidental injury

receive extensive, high-quality healthcare services, including antenatal care, skilled birth attendance, emergency obstetric care, and child health services.

The hospital is actively engaged in addressing the current malaria outbreak alongside its regular operations by implementing anti-malarial spray

initiatives and offering educational programs to the community on prevention methods.

Furthermore, Dambi Dollo University Teaching Hospital provides an extensive array of healthcare services to the surrounding communities. Additionally, community health initiatives constitute a significant component of the offerings at teaching hospitals.

These initiatives focus on outreach and education regarding diverse health concerns, with the objective of enhancing health outcomes and encouraging healthy practices within the community.

In conclusion, the hospital is an instrumental in delivering thorough and high-quality healthcare services to the populations it serves, DaDU Public and International Relations Directorate reported.



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